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Apple overload gives USU gleaning team, SNAC new ways to avoid waste

Page 2 - The Utah Statesman, November 22, 2022
By Audrey Flood
GUEST NEWS WRITER

Through the drought and early snowstorm this year, a Utah State University student-run gleaning organization picked and donated 11,977.5 pounds of local produce throughout the valley during the season from July to October.

Cache Community Gleaning faced some unique challenges during the past season. Gleaning coordinator Emma Watts said they picked more fruit than in 2020, but not as much as they did in 2019.

Watts said there were a couple of reasons why they didn't pick as much produce as they did during the first season, one reason being due to this year's drought.

"A lot of people's trees suffered from not having as much water," Watts said.

She explained the trees also could have had an off year, another reason for the decreased yield.

"They'll have a year where they just don't produce anything, and it's hard to know exactly when that's going to happen," Watts said.

This year's early October snowstorm was also challenging for the team to work through. Watts said they were mainly picking apples at the time, and she was afraid of how the colder temperatures would affect them.

"It compromises a lot of the fruit. It makes them have this watery core, and then they start rotting because they're frozen, then we can't use them," Watts said.

In addition to damage from the lower temperatures, the wind from the storm also made much of the produce unusable. According to Watts, a lot of the fruit had fallen because of the wind and branches falling.

The gleaning team did a session of picking fruit the day after the storm. Watts thought it would be their last of the season, so she canceled the remaining sessions they had scheduled.

Then, once the temperatures warmed up, the team was able to do additional sessions to pick apples until the fruit on trees was too mushy to give out to people. The USU Student Nutrition Access Center, or SNAC, was already overrun with apples, so they decided to stop picking.

Kara Bachman, the food security program coordinator, said it was difficult to manage the amount of apples SNAC received from the gleaning team. She was concerned they would go bad.

"There was a week that we had maybe 2,000 to 2,500 pounds of apples in our pantry. We were running out of space to put things and the whole pantry smelled like apples," Bachman said.

Her solution was to sort and grade the apples to make the distribution easier.

"It's really hard to manage that and so with the fruit now we grade it," she said. "We grade it into A, B and C."

According to Bachman, grade A produce can be eaten



PHOTO ILLUSTRATION BY Bailey Rigby

as is. Grade B goes to USU Extension and is made into applesauce or fruit leather. Grade C is composted or fed to animals.

To ensure the excess apples aren't wasted, Bachman said SNAC recently purchased a cider press and containers to make and package apple cider.

"We're going to package the cider in those and then hopefully distribute them in SNAC or find a way to sell it," Bachman said. She estimated the cider will be ready by the beginning of December.

In addition to apples, Watts said Cache Community Gleaning picked cherries, apricots, pears, peaches, grapes, plums, tomatoes and other miscellaneous produce property owners grew this year.

With the season finished, Watts continues to work on making the team more organized for next year's gleaning coordinator. She also plans to apply for more grants and make the team more well-known.

"In order for the gleaning program to really become like what we want it to be, we need more resources," Watts said. "We need to network more, so people know who we are."

According to the gleaning team's official website, their mission is to reduce food waste by harvesting excess produce in Cache Valley and feeding it to those who can use it.

Watts explained the team fulfills their mission by donating harvested produce to SNAC, the Cache Community Food Pantry and gleaning volunteers.

"We're just trying to not waste food that we can use to

give to people that need it, or whoever is going to eat it really," Watts said.

In addition to donating food to the community in Cache Valley, the team's efforts also benefit the trees they glean from.

"It's helpful for the community because we get to feed them but it's also really good for the tree owners to have that stress taken off the trees," Watts said. "When you leave a lot of fruit on the tree, then the branches don't get strong enough to sustain all of the fruit."

According to Watts, many trees they gleaned from were owned by older people who were unable to pick the fruit themselves. The gleaning team's work helped to strengthen the trees for future growing seasons.

Gleaning efforts at USU began in 2018, according to the gleaning team's website. The food preservation intern began a project to preserve fruit obtained at a low cost, so they picked fruit from local properties.

Read the rest of this story at usustatesman.com.



Audrey Flood is a sophomore studying human experience design and interaction. Audrey loves crying to Taylor Swift, playing video games on easy mode and being apart of Aggie Radio.

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A new look at USUSA elections

By Michael Popa II
NEWS STAFF WRITER

On Oct. 6, Utah State University Eastern voted to adopt Utah State University Student Association's constitution which formally combined the two student bodies under one government and has now raised questions about how elections will take place this year.

In an Oct. 26 meeting, the current USUSA council met to discuss the 2022 election cycle bylaw adjustments.

According to USU Eastern president, Bryson Pugh, the election process itself is likely to be the biggest change that students notice. He explained the first two weeks will be solely for those running for executive leadership board positions, which is open to all USU students.

In the coming 2022 election season,

students can also expect some changes to the campaigning process, including adjustments to campaign budgets and how campaigning violations will be assessed and reprimanded.

In the Oct. 26 meeting, the current budget limit of \$500 was thoroughly discussed.

USUSA Organizations and Campus Diversity Vice President Emilee Harmon said \$500 sounded too high.

"The budget is a tool to level the playing field, but \$500 is likely to be out of reach for some students, making it no longer a fair playing field," Harmon said. "We also have a voting base of only two — maybe three — thousand students and this just feels excessive, especially compared to other, larger universities."

As a rebuttal to Harmon's idea, Executive Vice President Porter Casdorff explained the reasoning behind a higher budget.

"People can now be campaigning on multiple campuses," he said, "and most people don't end up maxing out their budgets anyway."

This was followed by USUSA President Lucas Stevens adding, "If we keep limiting it, that would make it harder. I would think that statewide students would actually want to be able to do as much as they could and have that higher budget."

Also discussed in the meeting was what system would be used to assess campaign violations.

Currently, a point system is used where, depending on the severity of the violation of the election bylaws or USU Student Code, candidates are assessed between one and seven points.

Fewer than two points requires actions such as a written apology, or fine against 50% of campaign budgets. Three to six points receive fines up to the entirety of a candidate's campaign budget. Anything greater than seven points receives disqualification of the candidate or a reelection as decided by the election committee.

Casdorff spoke to the power of the point system in contrast to previous systems for bylaws, saying, "Legal had issues with us restricting students' free speech by punishing a candidate with restrictions on when they can campaign. The point system is effective in addressing this concern while also letting students know they can't just ignore the rules."

The director of leadership, Kevin Webb, also had something to say regarding what he thinks will have the most effective outcome.

"The way we set this up is so students could be disqualified if they have two major violations and are blatantly disregarding the rules twice," Webb said. "This is brand new and comes as a response to the advice from legal. Lucas did lots of research on how other institutions handle this same issue."

Read more of this story at usustatesman.com.

Michael Popa II is a sophomore at USU studying human biology, statistics and mathematics. He also serves as a combat medic for the United States Army and has a podcast called *Deep Roots* on Aggie Radio.



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Emmett the Eagle shaking hands with Big Blue to represent the uniting USUSA government.

National Avocado Day — so what?

Why people celebrate 'fake' national holidays and where they came from

By Jacee Caldwell
NEWS CONTENT MANAGER

Thanksgiving, Christmas and New Year's aren't the only holidays people are celebrating this winter season.

Ever heard of National Make Up Your Mind Day, Answer The Telephone Like Buddy The Elf Day, or International Ninja Day? These are just some examples of celebrations referred to as social media holidays, fake holidays, or — as they're best known as — national holidays.

National holidays allow something to be celebrated each day of the year, and often there are multiple each day.

Federal holidays, also known as public or legal holidays, are something completely different. Federal holidays cannot be created by anyone with an idea and registering it into a website. It must be recognized by the U.S. government.

However, it isn't as simple as the U.S. president picking a random day and declaring a celebration. Federal holidays are established by Congress for many different reasons.

According to the Congressional Research Service, reasons include emphasizing a certain aspect of our country's culture to show patriotism, the anniversary of a particular event that reflects American history or — in other circumstances — Congress has created a holiday because a large number of states start to celebrate a state holiday they think is important and relevant.

And although, legally, federal holidays are only applicable to the District of Columbia and federal employees to avoid restricting each state to certain rules, it still affects each state because of things like mail delivery, business hours and school closures.

There are currently 11 federal holidays, with the first being Independence Day, Thanksgiving, Christmas and New Year's established in 1870 and the most recent being Juneteenth established in 2021.

However, people don't always want to wait for the next excuse to celebrate.

One of those people is former Aggie Brandon Ellis who created his own Instagram page with his friends that was dedicated to posting every single day to recognize the national holiday that day.

Starting on July 5, 2018, Ellis had success for an entire year, celebrating 432 holidays in total.

"Life is hard, especially with constant bad news and plenty of difficulties that are unique to each individual," Ellis said. "Marketing schemes aside, a reason to celebrate a holiday doesn't have to be grand. Appreciating the tender mercies that make life meaningful is a good enough reason for me."

Although the Instagram account — @Holidaybois — only has 128 followers, Ellis said the fans they did have, looked forward to their celebrations.

Some fan favorites from the account include National Boss Employee Exchange Day, where he and his friends dressed up as characters from "The Office," and National Umbrella Day where they choreographed a dance to the song "Umbrella" by Rihanna.

As stated from an article on Racked, one of the very first national holidays was established in 1983 by the Chicago Salvation Army as National Donut Day, to recognize the women who handed out donuts to soldiers in World War I.

And even though these national holidays have been



PHOTO ILLUSTRATION BY BAILEY RIGBY

around since 1983, it isn't typical to walk around and see festivities going on at every corner for the holiday that day or hear about what type of chocolate someone got on their countdown calendar.

Some hope to keep it that way and argue that it will ruin what makes holidays — with real meaning — special.

Anneka Johns, a USU junior, questioned why others even entertain the idea.

"Why make a big deal of it? Can't you just celebrate the little things without having to let the whole world know?" Johns said.

Others disagree and argue that these national holidays allow each individual to celebrate something that reflects their own passions and gives people a chance to recognize the little things without feeling the pressure.

Alexis Johnson, a USU student, who has celebrated multiple holidays herself, said, "Honestly, it's fun to step

away from the giant holidays and kind of just see something simple. Sometimes the simpler things are more fun and more uplifting."

Some journalists have even joined in on the debate and say not only are holidays pointless, but they are also disrespectful and inconsiderate.

In an article from The Atlantic, James Hamblin explained that these made-up reasons to recognize random things are taking away from more important issues.

"North Korea tested a ballistic missile. Prisoners in Egypt refused food in protest of inhumane treatment. Residents of Baltimore rebuked the president of the United States for calling their district 'a disgusting, rat and rodent infested mess,'" Hamblin wrote. "Yet for much of the day, the No. 1 trending topic on Twitter was avocados."

The article continued to explain that not only does it show people's unsympathetic or uneducated abilities but shows how quick people can give away free advertising without even knowing it.

"Whimsical as these days seem, the creation and maintenance of national days are a phenomenon with massive financial implications," Hamblin said. "Many such days are used — or were even specifically invented — to coax people to talk about products and services."

With that being said, national holidays only continue to get more popular. There is even a national holiday on March 26 that has been deemed "Make Up Your Own Holiday Day," to promote creativity and spark imagination.

Even so, there is no official number for how many national holidays there are due to constant new additions and depending on the website, you can get different answers on what national holiday is actually being celebrated that day.

One website in particular, National Day Calendar, claims to be the authoritative source for information and includes national holiday merchandise, a daily radio network, social media pages, email newsletters, recipes, promotion collaboration opportunities and even holiday ambassadors.

This website also provides an opportunity to submit a request to register an idea as a national holiday, for a price.

Read the rest of this story at usustatesman.com.



Jacee Caldwell is a second year journalism student at USU in her second year with student media. Other than her passion for writing, Jacee loves eating Subway, watching football and anything made by Nike.

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'Kids can't wait': Aggies push to support Primary Children's Hospital at annual Aggieathon event

By Michael Popa II
NEWS STAFF WRITER

Nov. 13, Aggies gathered together to help fundraise for Intermountain Primary Children's Hospital in the fourth annual Aggieathon. After lots of dancing, bubble soccer, nine-square and fundraising, Utah State University raised more than \$20,000 for the children's hospital in just under 6 hours. Jenna and Kyson Stoker began Aggieathon after seeing an opportunity to help out the hospital that had already done so much for their family.

"I got involved as the USUSA service VP in 2018," Jenna Stoker said. "There was an opportunity to start the program at Utah State so I gathered a team of awesome people and we started the program."

USUSA is the Utah State University Student Association, a department of USU Student Involvement. Stoker was the Service Vice President in the USUSA Executive Council.

Stoker said Aggieathon means the world to her and she loves the opportunity to be able to help others.

"It's important to me because I know there are so many kids out there with illness and injury that need my support and love. And I think it is pretty neat that I can be part of this generation fighting for the next," she

said. "I have three nieces treated regularly at the hospital and have seen the amazing good Primary Children's does for these kids."

These funds are able to help support children like the Stoker's nieces.

While a blood pressure cuff or a pack of diapers for a premature baby might only cost \$3 or \$12, respectively, more specialized products and treatments like a bone marrow transplant, a ventilator or a crash cart — a cart with supplies and tools needed for life-saving measures such as resuscitation for cardiac arrest — cost \$2,500, \$5,000 and \$35,000, respectively.

"We are able to provide a network fighting for these kids as they battle pediatric illness and injury," Stoker said. "The funds we raise as students go towards things like charitable care, equipment, research, education and patient services. These all help kids feel OK and happy in the hospital, which is huge."

This year, almost 250 people signed up to help with the Aggieathon but Aggieathon executive team members, like Gentry Mower, would love to see more participation in the future.

"Most people know someone who has received treatment at the children's hospital," Mower said. "The more involvement we get, the more money we can raise to help families in need. The celebration is a great part of

Aggieathon, but the impact we can make for these families is greater."

Mower recognizes how blessed she is to be in good health and understands many kids don't have the same opportunities as her.

"I think Aggieathon is a way to relieve families of burdens that they haven't chosen at a time when they are limited by their adversity," Mower said.

When asked about participation from USU, Stoker said, "It's important for Aggies to get involved because this is our chance to get involved in something bigger than us. We have the chance to step outside ourselves and have a lot of fun while doing it."

Stoker emphasized every dollar counts and quite literally saves lives.

While this year's Aggieathon may be over, Primary Children's offers plentiful volunteer options for Utahns and Aggies hoping to serve these kids in need.

These volunteer opportunities include working at the information desk, in the emergency department, being a part of the kids crew, being with the children's outpatient rehabilitation services team or helping with pet therapy.

Applications for these volunteer positions can be found on Intermountain Healthcare's website.



PHOTO BY Michael Popa II

At the end of the event, they announced that Aggieathon had raised \$20,114.49 throughout the night.

The pointe of the holiday season

By Sage Souza
LIFESTYLES STAFF WRITER

You know when you can't pronounce the actor's or director's or artist's name? Yeah, that's how you know it's going to be good.

Pyotr Ilyich Tchaikovsky (say that five times fast) has garnered adoration across the globe for a century and a half with his classical ballet compositions, such as "Swan Lake" and "The Sleeping Beauty." And these are often considered works of art, but arguably none have matched the apex clout the near-universally-beloved "The Nutcracker" possesses.

This weekend, the Cache Valley Civic Ballet, or CVCV, is reviving their tradition of kicking off the holiday season to perform "The Nutcracker."

"We didn't get to do it last year because of just the complete insanity of last year," said Lexie Keller, a dancer and teacher at CVCB. "We're all pretty desperate to get back into "Nutcracker" season. It doesn't really feel like Christmas without it."

Artistic director Sandy Emile is also the creator of the

CVCB, which she founded in 1982. Since its genesis, Emile has directed "The Nutcracker" numerous times and has decades of experience.

"Our Nutcracker is for the community and with the community," she said. "Dancers in our 'Nutcracker' are not all ballet dancers."

There are also a few children throughout the company who have learning and/or physical disabilities, but Emile said she has established an environment at CVCB that is safe and welcoming to everybody.

"Sometimes it makes it a little more challenging," she said, "but they're all still part of our 'Nutcracker.'"

Ellie Filimoehala has been dancing at CVCB since she was three years old.

"It's so nice having a small studio here where you get to know everyone and it's not super competitive," Filimoehala said. "It's just a lot of fun and performing at the Eccles has always been my favorite thing since I was a little girl."

Filimoehala also said she prefers the familial energy of the CVCB over more competitive dance companies.

"I don't really need the glitz and glamour of being a professional," Filimoehala said. "It's definitely enough to be

able to dance."

Emile also emphasized the importance of having local volunteers to help perform the ballet.

"The Nutcracker" is for everybody," Emile said, "And it's a community organization about and for the community. These people are the real heroes because they make it happen. It's magic for everybody."

Alexis Stephens is a dedicated dancer at CVCB in addition to pursuing her nursing degree at Weber State University. Despite her tight schedule, Stephens refuses to give up ballet.

"I think it's just something if you love it enough, you're going to make time for it, even with reality," Stephens said. "Ballet has formed us into strong people, and so we've been able to carry it throughout our career and lives."

The Cache Valley Civic Ballet plans to hold four performances of "The Nutcracker" on Nov. 26, 27 and 29. The performances will take place at the Ellen Eccles Theatre on South Main Street. Tickets range from \$12 to \$30, but the CVCB offers a 25% discount to all students, Kindergarten-University.



Dancers Elli Filimoehala (left), Lexie Keller (middle), and Alexis Stephens (right) rehearse in the Whittier Community Center.

PHOTO BY Bailey Rigby

Pickleball paddles by Aggies are built like bison

By Clarissa Casper
LIFESTYLES STAFF WRITER

As the Thanksgiving season approaches, we all have many things to be thankful for. Two Aggies have found their gratitude this year from a pickleball company, along with the Jon M. Huntsman School of Business.

Collin Peterson and Daniel Warren met at Utah State University, found a mutual love for entrepreneurship and decided to create their own product.

“Dan and I both just really have an affinity for wanting to do something entrepreneurial-minded,” Peterson said.

They also both have a love for pickleball, which they said is rising in popularity.

“I was trying to play at the Fieldhouse last night, and there were people just waiting to get a chance to play,” Peterson said.

Both Warren and Peterson said they love pickleball because of the social aspect of the sport. It isn’t too competitive — unless you want it to be.

“It’s just a good, chill, kind of friendly activity that you can do with your friends,” Warren said. “In my experience, you can kind of just take a break and chat. It’s just a little bit more laid back.”

Peterson loves the game because you can make it whatever you want it to be.

“It can be relaxed or competitive, just depending on who you are playing with,” Peterson said.

Peterson and Warren used to play pickleball together at the Aggie Recreation Center, or ARC. After repeatedly using the wooden paddles that are provided there, they both wanted to create a paddle that would be sturdier and more reliable.

“We kept getting beat by these nicer paddles,” Peterson said. “So, we thought to ourselves, ‘OK we need to upgrade.’”

That is when these two business students came up with the idea to make their own pickleball paddle company that they said provides more durable paddles. They later landed on the name Bison Paddles.

“Bison are very big and very strong,” Warren said. “So, our tagline has kind of been paddles that are built like bison.”

These two entrepreneurs have found pride in their new business as strangers have used their paddles in various locations around Utah.

“It really does show that our product does what we say it does,” Peterson said. “It’s durable. It’s long-lasting.”

This pickleball company comes full circle now that students can rent and use these pickleball paddles at



SUBMITTED PHOTO

the ARC and other places on campus.

The two business owners said they are thankful for the many college students who have supported their business. Making something that would be affordable was one of their ultimate goals in creating this business.

“We found that there was no good paddles that were kind of in the mid-range,” Warren said. “We wanted to create something that would be durable, but also affordable for us college students.”

Warren and Peterson also said they are grateful for the university and the business school for the opportunity to create something real out of their ideas.

“Everything has really been facilitated by USU and the numerous instructors and connections we’ve made through Utah State and through the business school,” Peterson said. “They have really helped propel us to places we never probably would have thought of going.”

You can check out their products on their website <https://www.bisonpaddle.com/>



Clarissa Casper is a sophomore studying journalism and aquatic science at Utah State University. Outside of writing for the Statesman, she loves to hike, write poetry and watch whales.

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Ella Morgan enjoys making her own music, chilling with her siblings and friends, doing calculus, baking, and reading self-help books. Each week, Ella features a different genre of music on her radio show, Eclectically Yours, on air Wednesdays at 5 p.m.



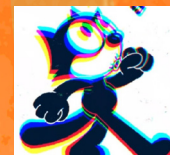
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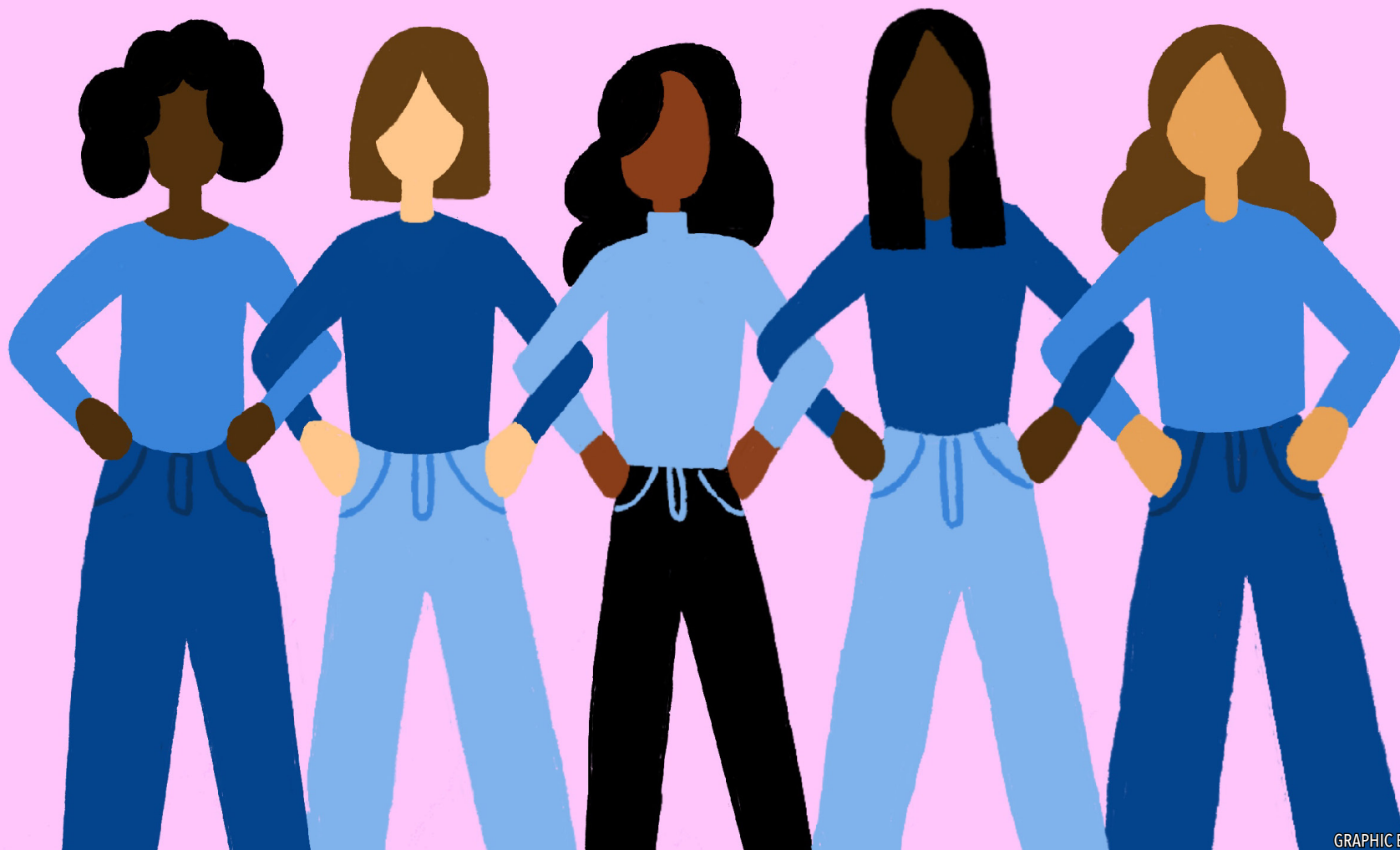


Sleepwalker
ILLENIUUM



Liftoff
Andrew Huang





GRAPHIC BY Clara Harmon

Sexist commentary has high prevalence in Utah

By Maya Mackinnon
NEWS STAFF WRITER

The Utah Women and Leadership Project, or UWLP, recently released a study on the high prevalence of normalized sexist commentary towards women in Utah.

According to the research and policy brief on the study, surveys targeting a diverse population of women were distributed and, after collecting responses and data regarding sexist themes, it revealed perceptions and specific commentary experienced by women happens on a normal basis.

Professor Susan Madsen led the research. She is the founder of UWLP and, according to her website, a global thought leader on women and leadership.

Included in the first of five briefs are women's responses to inquiries on the perceptions of sexism in Utah, overall themes of sexist comments and an open response section asking for examples of sexist commentary.

"We're not just wanting to highlight it — that's important, Madsen said, "But we want tools too. In order to really understand how sexism plays out, you have to hear stories, you have to hear examples."

The women participating in these surveys came from across the state and a range of diverse backgrounds and

circumstances in categories of race, age, faith, marital status, education, employment status and parental status.

"This brief just laid out some of the sections and some of the quantitative data," Madsen said.

Being released in coming months, the next four briefs will provide more research into individual responses of survey takers and tools to use when responding to sexism. According to Madsen, the briefs will tell stories and examples of how to avoid sexist comments.

She said the main purpose of this research is to address normalized sexism and to provide tools for women to combat everyday sexism.

The research has been made public and readily available in various ways, such as through Utah State University Extension.

Students have responded with conversations sparked by the study's survey questions and results.

"Sexist comments are common on campus when people are talking about their majors," said Briana Henke, a USU student. "There are some majors that people assume are for a particular gender and when someone doesn't follow that expectation, they often fall victim to offensive comments and an unnecessary amount of attention."

Henke said she hears the most sexist comments while participating in sports.

Madsen hopes more students will use the tools provided in the research and implement them into their dealings with sexist commentary. Finalizing this study, her call to the community is to become acquainted with the research.

"Be informed, use the information that we'll be releasing through the other four to think about your own actions and think about how you can teach and implement those kinds of things," Madsen said. "These are just tools to get a deeper understanding, educating people, making it available so that other people can read and can have open conversations."



Maya Mackinnon is a third year journalism student at USU. Outside of news writing for the Statesman, Maya loves to go outside, travel and make art.

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Lack of Middle Eastern demographic option at USU causes concern

By Brock Marchant
NEWS STAFF WRITER

Despite efforts made by several student organizations and Utah State University to be inclusive and support diversity, students and faculty members have begun to take note of the options, or lack thereof, on the ethnicity section of USU paperwork.

When applying to become a student at USU, people are asked about their ethnicity through a series of questions.

First, they are asked if they identify as Hispanic/Latino. Then they are instructed to mark at least one of the racial groups of which they consider themselves to be a part of from the following options: American Indian or Alaska Native; Asian; Black or African American; Native Hawaiian or another Pacific Islander; or White.

While these options may present a category in which many USU students and faculty members feel comfortable, such is not the case for everyone. One such example is Danny Stewart, an English graduate instructor at USU.

“There should be an option for Middle Eastern students and faculty to claim their true heritage on the application process for work as well as for education. I think it’s important for demographics alone if not for possibilities surrounding scholarships,” Stewart said. “There are Middle Eastern people in this country. Why don’t we count?”

Though Stewart feels the lack of an option is an issue, others such as Abdulkafi Albirini, a linguistics and Arabic professor at USU, said he thinks that adding a Middle Eastern option to USU ethnicity questions would be too broad and is unnecessary.

“The lack of the Middle Eastern ethnicity option is understandable because the notion of the Middle Eastern ethnicity is very fluid and does not capture the ethnic diversity of the Middle East area,” Albrini said. “Different human communities and organizations use different approaches, different typologies and different social constructs to classify their subjects.”

The reasoning for the lack of option may also correlate directly with the reason for the question’s existence.

According to Michael Torrens, the executive director of the Office of the Executive Vice President and Provost, the university is federally required to report ethnicity statistics as part of the Integrated Postsecondary Education Data System given by the U.S. Department of Education.

The required statistics reflect the possible answers to USU’s ethnicity questions verbatim, meaning the university is collecting the exact information it is required to, no more and no less.

Torrens specified that his office is responsible for reporting non-financial data to the government and does not determine which options are included in the admissions process.

While this may help to explain the lack of a Middle East option, Afsane Rezaei, a USU English professor, said the university could collect data beyond what it is federally required.

“My experience hasn’t been with admissions documents, but with HR forms that I had to fill out at the time of hiring,” Rezaei said, explaining her experience with needing to choose an ethnicity for USU.

She explained that she didn’t feel comfortable identifying with any of the provided ethnic categories and ultimately decided to draw her own box labeled “other.”

“There needs to be another option for people from Middle Eastern and North African background,” Rezaei said. “While it will take at least another decade for that language to be added to the census, universities have more freedom to incorporate more inclusive racial and ethnic categories as part of their admission and hiring.”



Brock Marchant is a sophomore at USU studying journalism and political science. He loves writing poetry, playing guitar and meeting new people.

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USU Ultimate is heading to nationals

It's a first for the nationally ranked men's squad

By Jake Ellis
SPORTS STAFF WRITER

Utah State Men's Ultimate is heading to nationals for the first time in program history. It's been a long time coming. After several trips to regionals, the Aggies got over the hump in 2021.

After losing in the regional final to Washington, Utah State defeated Utah in the game-to-go, 12-9, at the Northwest Regionals Tournament to qualify for the 2021 USA Ultimate College Championships.

The victory over Utah was particularly sweet because the Aggies lost the conference championship to the Utes earlier in the season.

Also nationally ranked for the first time in program history, the USU frisbee fellas want to make themselves known at nationals.

Senior captain Blake Jordan thinks they can put together a solid run.

"Honestly we want to go surprise some people," Jordan said. "Because it's our first year at nationals, people are kinda already writing us off. Saying things like, 'We're just happy to be there.' We're gonna go make the bracket. We're gonna finish the year as a top 16 team.

We're gonna try to contend with some teams. We're gonna go in hungry. We're gonna go in ready to turn some heads."

Fellow senior captain Skyler Jones agreed with Jordan. He wants to receive the credit he feels the Aggies are due.

"I want them to know that it wasn't a fluke for us to get in," Jones said. "Yeah, we technically upset Utah to get in, but everybody on our team knows that we were better than them and that we're better than a lot of teams that they don't give us credit for."

Junior Tony Mounga agreed with his captains.

"We think we're gonna make some noise," Mounga said.

Utah State has climbed up the ranks of college ultimate quickly in the past five years. Senior captain Garrett Martin joined the team in 2016 when the program started to see success.

"My first year on the team we made regionals and that

was a big deal back then because it was the first time we had ever done that," Martin said. "Since then, we've made regionals every year that I've been on the team."

They followed that up by winning their conference championship for the first time in 2019.

Martin and his family have had a big role in developing Utah State over the past few years. His older brother Ryan played and coached for the Aggies until the past year. When Garret joined the team, he set his sights on

that are just willing to sacrifice and just do what it takes to win," Jordan said. "We don't care about individual glories. We just want to be there for each other and help each other."

Not only has their group effort been impressive, but most players have made a significant play during the season.

"Everyone on this team has had a play this year that I can remember. From rookies who it was their first year

playing ultimate at all... to people like myself, Tony Mounga, Blake Jordan who have all been playing since high school," Martin said. "And that's something that's hard to say for a lot of teams, that like our full team is capable of contributing and being a valuable member and that's awesome to see."

This Aggie run comes after a suspended season last year. Like many teams, the COVID-19 pandemic derailed their 2020 season.

Utah State had gone 14-0 up until their season was suspended. The Aggies say practice during the pandemic helped them become a national caliber team.

"That was our really big building year," Jordan said. "We built a lot of confidence in 2020 and then the COVID stoppage happened. And then a group of us just kept with it for the entire COVID stoppage, and then we just worked hard and got to where we are."

Although Utah State qualified for nationals this year, the 2021 season hasn't been all smooth sailing. The Aggies lost their conference championship to Utah, but surprised quality teams at regionals.

In their first game of regional play, the Aggies faced off with

the No. 2 seeded team Western Washington. Utah State came back after trailing early in the game to win on double game point when they were pulling. Mounga thinks the win helped propel them through the rest of the tournament.

"It just gave us some validation," Mounga said. "We needed to know we could beat big teams."

For Martin, it was a statement win.

"We just beat the best team in our pool, why can't we



Blake Jordan tosses a frisbee during a practice on Nov. 15 at Legacy Fields.

PHOTO BY Edward Harimoto

taking the Aggies to nationals from the very beginning.

"When I first got here, that was my goal," Martin said. "I was like, man I want to be one of the guys to take this team to nationals. I want to be one of the guys to do that."

Jones, Jordan and Martin credit the dedication of their teammates for the success Utah State has seen this season.

"Honestly we have the best team. We have so many guys



PHOTO BY Edward Harimoto

Blake Jordan and the Utah State Ultimate Team prepare for the national tournament in California in December.

just win out?” Martin said.

The Aggies nearly did that, losing only to No. 3 Washington, 15-6. Their success at regionals led to the Aggies’ first-ever national ranking. Utah State was ranked 23rd but has since dropped to 25th in Ultiworld’s College D-1 Men’s Power Rankings.

“We joke around a lot that we’ve been disrespected for a long time,” Jordan said. “Just cause, you know, Utah State is not known as an Ultimate school and people just don’t like to talk about us a whole bunch. So to get the national respect, to get the national ranking really means a lot to us this year.”

Players say the team’s focus on supporting and building up teammates with positive energy has had a big impact

on their performance.

“Our captains are really awesome. They do a really good job of making sure that if you mess up, it’s not something that everybody beats you down, but they help lift you up,” said sophomore Ben Hoffman.

“It really comes down to us supporting each other on the sideline and something we talk about is having a loud, active sideline to give energy to players on the field,” Martin said, “cause there’s nothing better than when you make a sick play and have the entire sideline erupting.”

Utah State will start group play at nationals on Dec. 17 in Norco, California.

 @JakeEllisonair

USU teams announce 2022 Signing Class

By Jacob Nielson
SPORTS CONTENT MANAGER

Nov. 10 to 17 was NCAA fall signing week. Here are the players that signed to Utah State:

Soccer

- Talia Winder, Defender, Green Canyon High School
- Tess Werts, Midfielder, Corner Canyon High School
- Hannah Roe, Midfielder, Layton High School
- Kaylie Chambers, Midfielder, Arvada, Colorado
- MacKenzie Hunninghake, Keeper, Leander, Texas

Softball

- Tess Bumiller, Pitcher, Redmond, Washington
- Jaden Colunga, Outfielder, Colton, California
- Grace Matej, Catcher, Orangevale, California
- Kya Pratt, Middle Infielder/Outfielder, Temecula, California
- Hailey McLean, Pitcher/Outfielder, Sparks, Nevada
- Sydney Saldana, Pitcher, Seal Beach, California

Volleyball

- Leah Wilton-La Boy, Setter, San Rafael, California
- Audrah Radford, Outside, Nampa, Idaho

Gymnastics

- Amari Evans, McKinney, Texas
- Dani Lacasse, Las Vegas

Women’s Basketball

- Tierra Hill-Brown, Forward, Stockton, Calif.
- Natalie Fraley, Guard, Kelso, Wash.

Men’s Basketball

- Mason Falslev, Guard, Sky View High School



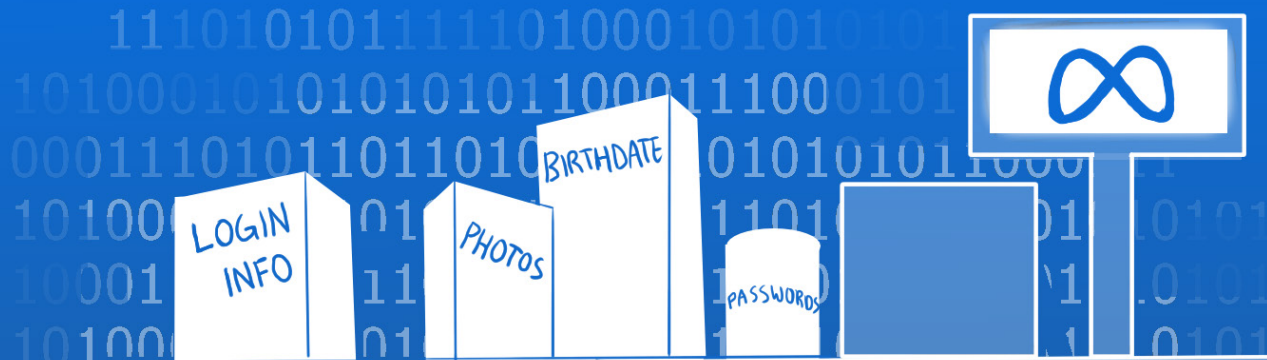
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Meta: You're the product



GRAPHIC BY Keith Wilson

With Meta, you are not using its services for free; you are paying with your privacy and personal information. That very information also has questionable security.

Meta is recently named the parent company of Facebook, Instagram and WhatsApp. All three of these companies primarily profit off advertising. When using Facebook, you the consumer give away your confidential information.

Meta's ARPU, or average revenue per user, at the end of 2020 was \$32.03, meaning your private information and your usage of the platforms is on average worth \$32.

In April, over 500 million Facebook users' logins were leaked onto a hacking forum. The information leaked contained phone numbers, full names, locations and birthdates. Such information can be used to infiltrate other social media platforms or even more private accounts like your bank account. The information could be used for impersonation purposes as well.

Your account login as well as the expansive information stored about you on Facebook is best kept private. More generally, your information on Meta is best kept private.

As you use the applications, information about your interactions is collected: between you, people, pages, groups, hashtags, etc. Information on your financial transactions on the site, duration of viewing a post or add, every comment you make and every picture you

like is recorded by Facebook and Instagram on their site.

However, the infiltration does not stop there. Their partner advertisers also use the information for their sites, from what you searched on your web browser to where you plan on traveling. Say you log in to your Spotify using Facebook; Spotify can access the photos you post, as well as your other activity on Facebook.

On Meta's website, they talked about their progress with confidentiality; they mention the government request for user data has increased 10%, with this past year being over 200,000 requests. This information serves as a reminder: anything you do on social media is recorded and can be used in a court of law. Your actions online reflect who you are offline.

So, at this point, you can see how much information Facebook holds about you, and its ability to give out that information. So why should that matter to you?

Using the information gathered, Facebook creates a profile — without your name and exact identifying characteristics such as general location and likes — and gives the profile to advertisers to create personalized ads for you. Advertisers pay for the resources, information and advertising space.

There are ways to protect the information in question. Facebook and Instagram have specific settings you can go into to remove collected information and prevent specific types such as search history from being used in advertising. You should only do online purchases with credit cards, and check your account

after transactions.

Methods such as these help protect the information you give to Meta. Because you are the product, you are not necessarily guaranteed protection. Meta is still a company that can be hacked.

Pravin Poudel, a computer science master's student at Utah State University, agreed social media does not guarantee the protection of your information and does not work in the users' best interest.

However, he also said, "Social media is worth it, in exchange for free use," when referring to using his personal information for profit, "If I had to pay for Facebook — that would be a lot."

As students, social media can be a relevant tool in our lives. About half of Americans get their news from social media. Thousands of USU students stay up-to-date on student events through Instagram: @usuaggielife current has 37.7 thousand followers and @usuevents has 13.6 thousand followers.

It is ultimately your choice of what's more important: free resources or privacy?



Sara Prettyman is a Maryland born and raised sophomore. She's majoring in applied mathematics and loves drawing, running and reading.

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Opinion: USU needs to create space for marginalized students

While Utah State University has plenty of space where the sagebrush grows, there is something we lack as an institution — diversity and inclusivity.

Since coming to USU, I have been able to work with some amazing people and gain a deeper understanding of the role that diverse students play at our university.

According to the Campus Pride Index, an online database that analyzes how universities rank regarding LGBTQ+ issues, USU only has a two-out-of-five-star rating. Additionally, we received that same score for LGBTQ+ student life.

As a student who identifies as a member of the LGBTQ+ community, I find this alarming, especially because Utah has the highest suicide rate among LGBTQ+ individuals.

I've personally heard my fair share of micro-aggressive commentary. It's upsetting that this type of behavior is still present.

Erika Lindstrom, the gender and sexuality coordinator with the USU Inclusion Center, emphasized the importance of allyship.

"There's a lot of microaggressions that are occurring in our community," Lindstrom said. "Educating and advocating should be done when these homophobic and transphobic statements are made. We're listening."

One way that space is being created for LGBTQ+ students is through events like the USU Drag Show. Residence Life and the Inclusion Center have partnered together for this event.

This event raises awareness for local LGBTQ+ resources, as well as fundraising for them.

USU also struggles when it comes to racial and ethnic diversity on campus. According to the USU 2019 Diversity Survey Data Report, only 8% of USU students identified as students of color.

As a white student, it isn't my place to speak on behalf of these students. However, a number of non-white students have shared their experiences.

Emiliee Harmon, the USUSA Organizations and Campus Diversity Vice President, shared her personal experience as a Black student in a guest column she wrote for the *The Utah Statesman* in October.

"I spent three years in a certain college where I was met with many micro- and macro-aggressions from professors and students — for example, being asked, "No, where are you really from?" by a professor (that



PHOTO VIA TWITTER @USUAggies

same professor also said slavery was "economically attractive") as well as being talked over by my white male counterparts," Harmon wrote.

Harmon also explained how her and USUSA are currently combatting this lack in diversity.

Earlier this year they passed Executive Council Bill 2022-01 which established a standing inclusion statement for the organization. This is a step in the right direction in creating a space for marginalized students.

Harmon also spearheaded Diversity Week in October, which included multiple other activities to educate our largely white student demographic on various cultures.

Allie Dina works with Latinos-in-Action at USU. She said she thinks USU can do better at promoting the nature of their diversity.

"USU does a good job promoting diversity, but they don't address it accurately," Dina said. "That's not a bad thing, but it builds a false sense of comfort."

Dina, being a non-white student, does not feel accurately represented at USU, but she thinks it's possible for marginalized students to create space for themselves on campus.

"Marginalized students have spaces set aside for them, but have to search," she said. "They aren't as accessible. We need to make these spaces bigger."

Dina has also experienced aggression related to her identity while on a USU campus, and she said she feels situations of this capacity aren't properly handled and there is still plenty of room for growth.

Luis Rodriguez also shared his thoughts on how USU can create a better space for non-white students.

"Being a predominantly white institution, it comes down to students being comfortable in spaces where there are those from predominantly marginalized communities," Rodriguez said. "White students do not feel comfortable in spaces that are not afforded to them. White students need to be uncomfortable."

Rodriguez emphasized white conformity is still happening on campus and when marginalized voices are heard, one individual is often selected to speak on behalf of their community.

"They have one experience of the community, but they're not representative of the whole," he said. "Whether it's positive or negative, that experience now gets amplified to represent

what everyone is experiencing in that marginalized community."

It's also important to note that this isn't new. Sothara Tieng, one of the founding members of Theta Nu Xi Multicultural Sorority at USU, recalls experiencing backlash when founding the sorority in 1999.

"A lot of people were mad when we started the sorority," Tieng said. "They thought we were trying to steal pledges from other sororities."

Tieng also emphasized the importance of diversity to USU and said it's important to her as someone who isn't white because she didn't experience that type of diversity growing up.

Read the rest of this story on usustatesman.com



Jared Adams is a sophomore studying communications. Outside of news writing, Jared enjoys coffee, elephants, rainy days and Taylor Swift.

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Opinion: Gifted and talented programs are unjust but essential

By Sara Prettyman
OPINION WRITER

Gifted programs in schools are essential, but testing into them should be done part way through students' elementary education instead of at the very beginning. This will accommodate students with learning disabilities.

The Utah State Board of Education considers gifted and talents students as individuals in grades K-8 that have a general intellectual ability above those in the same age group. This is determined by a test administered by the Local Education Agency, or LEA.

There is no single perfect program for education. Every public school exists in a different socioeconomic climate, has a unique decision-making hierarchy, and caters to unique students. To address the problems in the gifted programs, the solution is to not eliminate them on a national level but to augment them on a local level.

For instance, on Oct. 8, the mayor of New York City, Bill de Blasio, announced his plan to phase out gifted and talented education. By doing so, he fulfilled one of his main campaign points: "every child gets a quality education."

This specific plan is built for New York City, a city drastically different from rural Logan. As such, methods of achieving quality education should be different at a local, state and national level.

The same can be said for the differences in testing. The results of the LEA testing show higher intellectual ability grants students the ability to join gifted programs, such as the STEM enrichment programs.

The test is used to identify students who are exceedingly gifted, but it secludes those who have educational disabilities.

According to the Individual with Disabilities Education Act, or IDEA, there are 13 distinct categories of intellectual disabilities. Three of the more common disabilities are ADHD, ADD and dyslexia. The average age for diagnosis for ADHD and ADD is seven. Dyslexia diagnosis is around the same,

albeit a little younger.

However, the National Association for Gifted Children suggests testing for gifted programs for kids under the age of 6. Without proper accommodations following diagnosis, these children are unequally tested against their peers.

children are considered gifted in public schools, while only 3.5% of Black children are considered gifted. Over twice the number of white children are put into the enrichment programs. How is that considered equal?

However, the problem is not with the program.

The problem is with the testing. Historically, standardized testing has been discriminatory to minority races.

By altering the current testing and postponing the placement test until they're older, gifted programs can exist without being discriminatory. Instead, they can be beneficial.

The National Association of Gifted Children said intellectually-talented adolescents showed the same aptitude growth from 13 years old to middle age based off their SAT results. The test reflected their future growth and development. Placement into gifted programs at that age grants students the ability to develop even more.

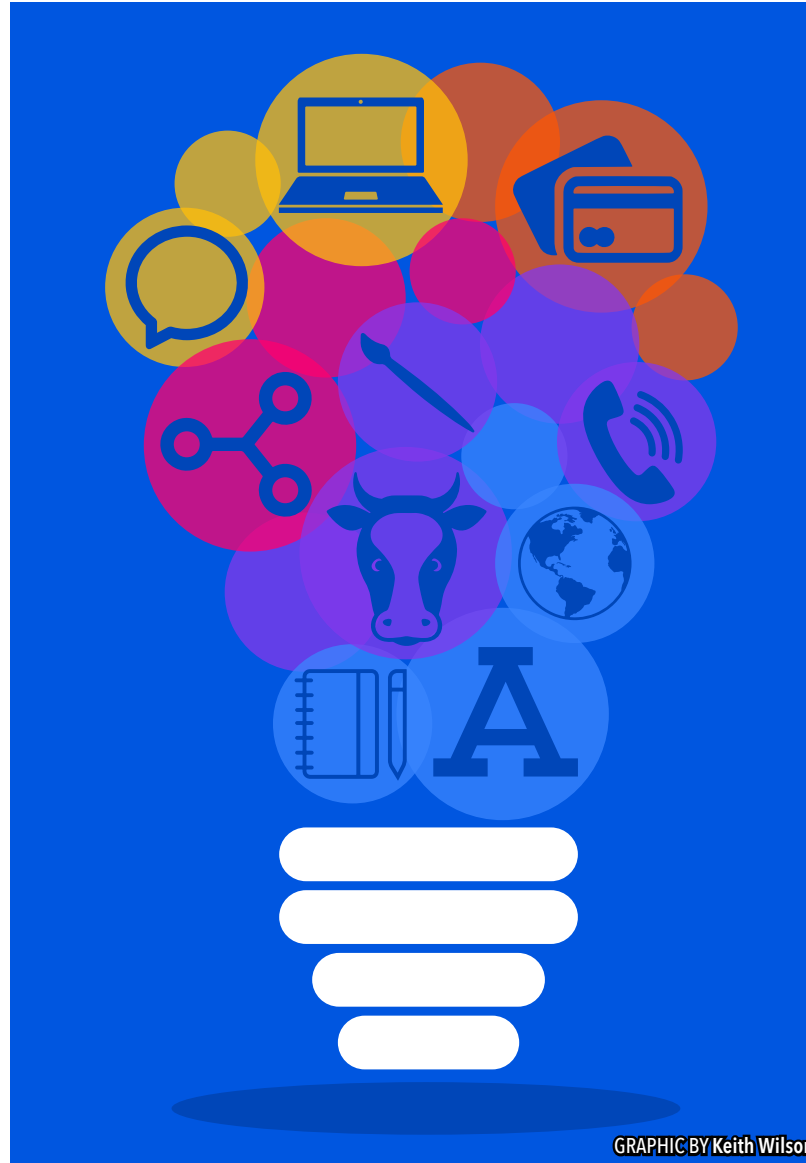
Gifted programs help children, and they also give those select students the ability to excel and thrive in a way appropriate for them. The Davidson Institute research shows that a quarter of gifted people are underachievers due to a lack of satisfaction in their work; it is too simple for them.

There are other methods for assisting gifted individuals. There are at least 20 distinct types of acceleration in education: early admission to kindergarten, grade skipping, extracurricular programs and early graduation to name a few.

Charter schools and private schools are also an option. For low-income students, there are scholarship and grants available. The problem here is not all parents have time or the desire to apply for these programs. The child then gets punished for the apathy of the parent.

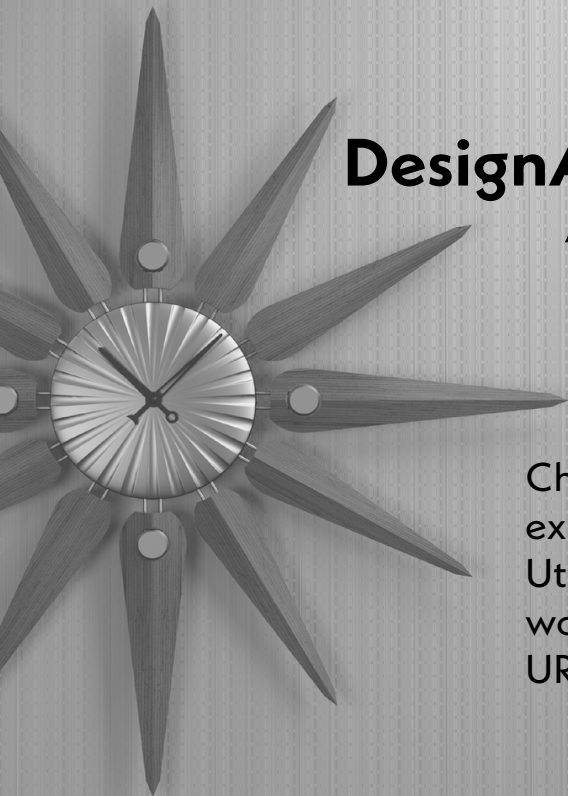
In an education system that believes in equality, it is difficult to create equal opportunities when certain parents do not work in the best interest of their children. Programs like the gifted ones exist for students of all different backgrounds.

Read the rest of this story on usstatesman.com



Examinations like the ACT give students who are Learning Disabled up to three extra hours to complete their exam. The same level of consideration should be applied to early childhood examinations.

Gifted programs have also been debated as being racist and elitist. Nationwide, 8.1% of white



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CARTOON BY Keith Wilson



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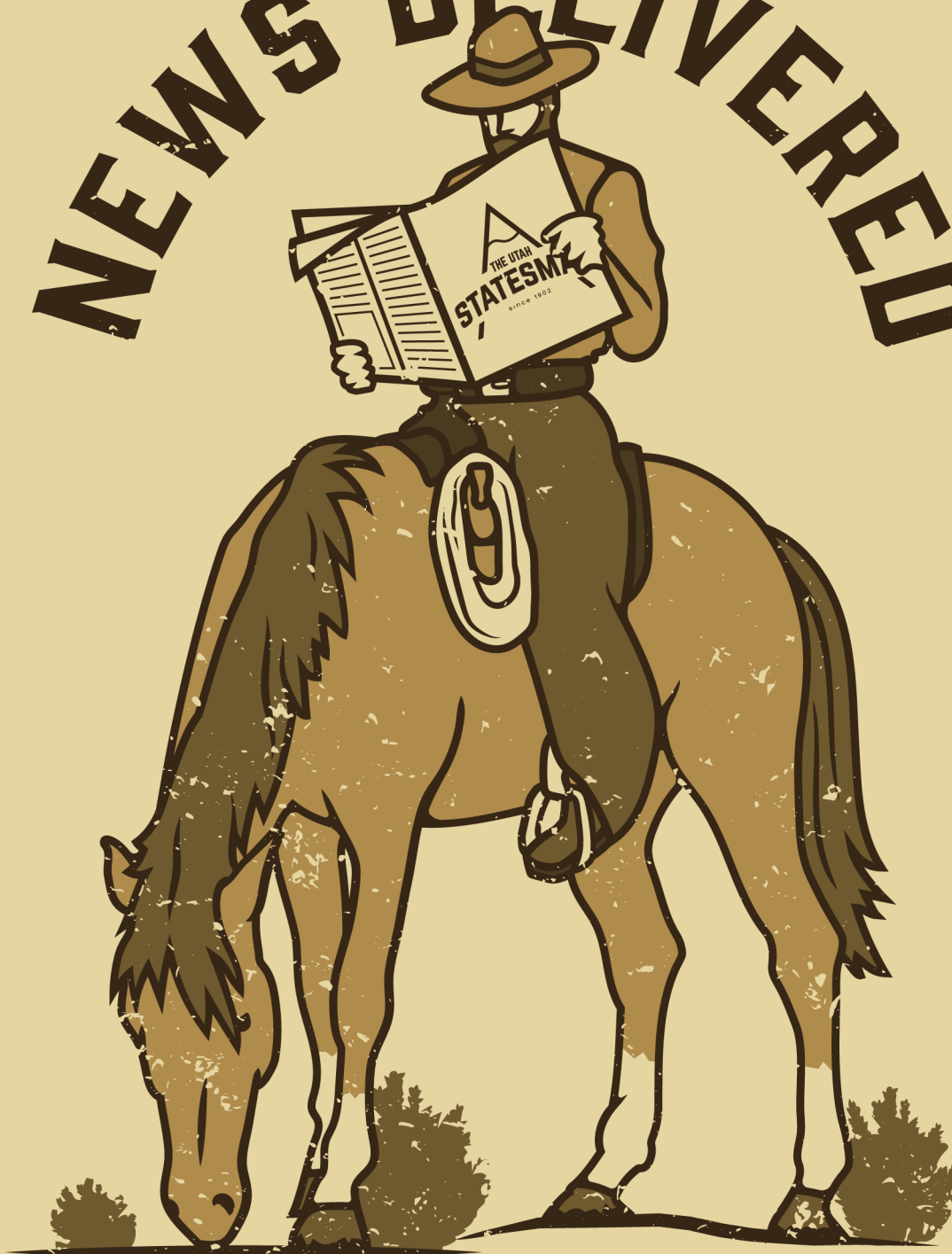
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9	7	3	8	2	6	4	5	1
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