

# slcc



## Engaged Learning

Growth came in unexpected ways for students and graduates.

*panoramic*



Double exposure of women's soccer player Emma Fry controlling the ball in a game against Snow College.



# slcc

Winter / Spring 2022

## Departments

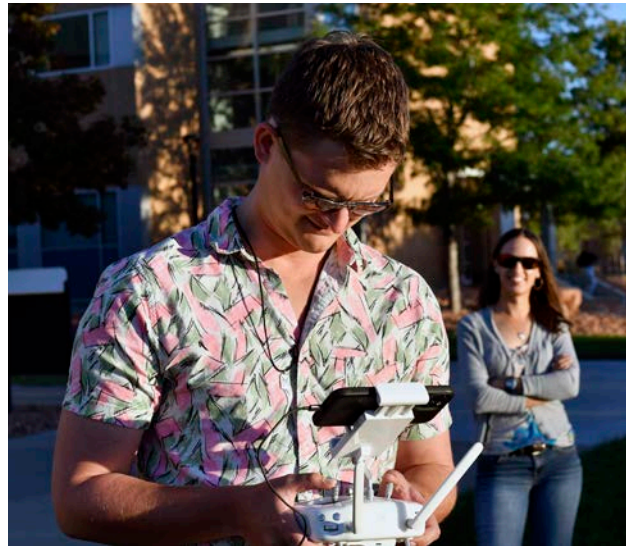
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Illustration by Keith Negley



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PACE concentrates on empowering and supporting underserved youth to prepare them for college.



# dialogue



## Engaged and Impactful

We've taken great effort at Salt Lake Community College to implement high-impact practices in our instruction, to instill a sense of community involvement and civic engagement — a sense of service and achievement — along with focused, critical thinking and hands-on learning to help students make good decisions in their studies, careers and lives.

We focus our courses and programs to challenge students to be doers, to question and find answers. Metaphorically, we like to think we're providing the foundation of a bridge they are building to cross any chasm along their paths. Knowledge is power and the application of knowledge results in growth, progress and success.

Over 4,000 students at SLCC are involved in engaged learning and high-impact practices across

all disciplines. It's a commitment we've made to cumulative learning, that one block of knowledge and experience builds on another. We invite you to read starting on page 14 about the many ways the college implements engaged learning.

Higher academic achievement, higher civic involvement, gaining new perspective on social issues and applying skills and knowledge in real-world working situations at the community college level is, frankly, a great achievement. SLCC is no longer "just" a community college. It's a community asset because we are engaged in community building one student at a time. It's not impossible. It's SLCC.

—SLCC Magazine Staff

## Staff

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Published biannually by the SLCC Institutional Advancement Division, 801-957-4000.

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SLCC Magazine won gold awards in 2019 and 2020 from the Council for Advancement and Support of Education and the National Council for Marketing & Public Relations for excellence in writing and design.

Salt Lake  
Community  
College 



Top left, clockwise:

1. Children play beneath a rainbow parachute as part of an Eccles Early Child Development Lab field trip on the Taylorsville Redwood Campus.
2. President Deneece G. Huftalin (third from left), along with students and staff, breaks ground at the new Herriman Campus.
3. Yoga instructor Val Johnson gives free summer lessons outside on the Taylorsville Redwood Campus.
4. Student Shelby Jensen competed in the Paralympics in Tokyo in the sport of wheelchair fencing.
5. Graduates react to a video played during 2021 Commencement, held at the Maverik Center in August instead of May due to the pandemic.





# *slccbulletin*



Nicole Musci  
steadies her  
drone.



# Aerial Academics

Salt Lake Community College offers state's first higher-ed drone program

Nicole Musci and Freeman Stevenson can see their futures just by looking up, and they control it in their hands. Both are on their way to earning a certificate to fly drones in SLCC's Small Unmanned Aerial Systems program, aka the drone program.

SLCC's path toward earning a certificate of proficiency to become a commercial drone pilot is the first of its kind within the Utah System of Higher Education.

Musci and Stevenson have bachelor's degrees in anthropology, work for the same environmental consulting group and see drones as making their jobs easier and more efficient. "Drones provide a way for us to not have to walk, hike or drive all over or to record roads in our research," says Musci, 26, who also has a bachelor's degree in English. Her job requires sometimes physically rigorous field work while helping clients with environmental planning, regulatory compliance and work on natural and cultural resources management.

"I want people from all around to be able to take these core drone courses that teach them how to fly and get FAA certified," says SLCC Instructor and Geosciences Coordinator Adam Dastrup, who started the program in 2019. "If you're making any money off of drones working for a company or a nonprofit, you have to be licensed as a commercial pilot by the FAA."

Drone technology is a growing industry that has multiple interdisciplinary career opportunities for students. Courses in SLCC's program include Digital Imaging with Drones, Fundamentals of Drones, and Photogrammetry. Students start on a classroom simulator and then fly smaller, cheaper drones. They practice maneuvering through obstacle courses and quickly progress to larger, more technologically advanced drones.

Students at SLCC learn to use drones for photography, videography, making commercials, photojournalism, criminal justice, environmental science and disaster responses, such as monitoring wildfires. Dastrup's goal is to work with departments across the college to incorporate drone technology in as many relevant programs as possible.



Adam Dastrup,  
SLCC Instructor  
and Geosciences  
Coordinator

## HOW TO GET THERE

### PROGRAM

Small Unmanned Aerial Systems

### DURATION

One year (23 credits)

### TUITION AND FEES

\$6,200

### DRONE PILOT AVERAGE SALARY IN UTAH

\$56,473 (ZipRecruiter.com)

Marjorie Wilson  
takes notes as  
Brenda Gardner  
explains a math  
problem.



# Reimagined:

## New course overhauls Developmental Math approach

Marjorie Wilson and Tara Hendry are in their 40s, and their classmate Ashlee Larson is half their age, but they share one common denominator as they start college – they’re rusty at math. SLCC may have solved the problem for many who believe college-level math to be off-putting if not an insurmountable obstacle on their academic paths.

The old ways of getting incoming college students up to speed in mathematics – take a placement exam and let the score decide what course you take next for an entire semester – just haven’t been working well. Students haven’t been succeeding at the traditional developmental math course sequences at desirable rates, and many change their academic trajectory or drop out of higher education all together as a result. “Students were not moving along with their peers, and this leads to isolation,” says Brenda Gardner, associate math professor at SLCC

**"This course has definitely boosted my confidence."**

about the old Math 980. She says some students who struggle are forced to decide whether to go deeper into debt on multiple developmental courses or bail on college.

With pressure from state legislatures around the country, higher education experts have been rethinking their approaches to developmental math, moving toward multiple measures – not just a single test – to place students on the right mathematics track.

SLCC math educators began digging into best practices in 2019, brainstormed ideas as a collective faculty in 2020 and now hope the switch to a competency-based education (CBE) course, called Foundations for Math Success, will be a game changer. “This course focuses on laying the foundation for success for any college-level math course by teaching

students the concepts and skills necessary to be successful in their college math careers,” says Suzanne Mozdy, SLCC associate dean over Mathematics. “Students still move forward with their peers, so they don’t feel isolated, but unlike a normal class, the concepts they didn’t quite get are worked on until they understand.”

After an intensive initial assessment at the beginning of this past semester, the first group of about 350 SLCC students were placed into one of three cohorts for a one-, two- or three-semester plan to sharpen their math skills. This placement is based on recommendations from instructors, time commitments students agree to and what math skills they know and don’t know. “We knew we wanted this course to be affordable and minimize exit points for the student,” says Gardner. A sizable squad of instructors handle about 20 sections of the Foundations course with funding for additional

administrative support. Because of the academic “relationships” students build with instructors, it’s also the program’s goal to maintain that student-teacher continuity. Peer-to-peer support is also a focus of the program – students helping each other.

After only a few months in, Hendry says, “I’ve already had a change of attitude to where I can say now, ‘I can do this.’ This course has definitely boosted my confidence.”

The CBE approach is intended to successfully move students along more efficiently and at a pace that works for them, hopefully resulting in higher completion and retention rates. Doing it the old way would mean being in the same class all semester with students of varying degrees of mathematics mastery all learning the same concepts at the same time and speed.

Gardner says the emphasis has shifted from teaching students “procedurally” to instructing on the “why” behind the “do” while making sure they master all concepts before the end of the term.



## Expensive textbooks becoming a thing of the past at SLCC.

Nearly 200,000 students have saved nearly \$20 million since 2014 through a college effort to provide free, online textbooks and resources.

Dubbed OPEN SLCC, the initiative has offered online materials for over 9,000 courses, saving money for students who otherwise would have had to purchase costly textbooks. It was recognized nationally in 2018 as an innovative method to aid higher education when the program was commended on the floor of the U.S. House of Representatives.

OPEN SLCC provides learning materials that are legally and freely downloaded, edited and shared. That includes textbooks, curricula, syllabi, lecture notes, assignments, tests, projects, audio, video and animation. Program administrators plan to expand the program even more, to maximize educational opportunities and make it easier for students to learn and succeed while minimizing costs.

## SLCC ranked No. 8 best employer

SLCC recently ranked No. 8 in Forbes magazine’s top 10 Best Employers in Utah. Forbes surveyed 80,000 Americans working for businesses with at least 500 employees over a 9-month period in the annual survey.

Employees were asked to rate their employers on a variety of criteria, including safety of work environment, competitiveness of compensation, opportunities for advancement and openness to telecommuting. Respondents were asked how likely they would be to recommend their employer to others.

The top 10 Utah employers on the Forbes list include: Costco; ARUP Laboratories; U of U Healthcare; Salt Lake County Library Services; Delta Airlines; Utah Department of Health; University of Utah; Salt Lake Community College; Home Depot and Verizon.

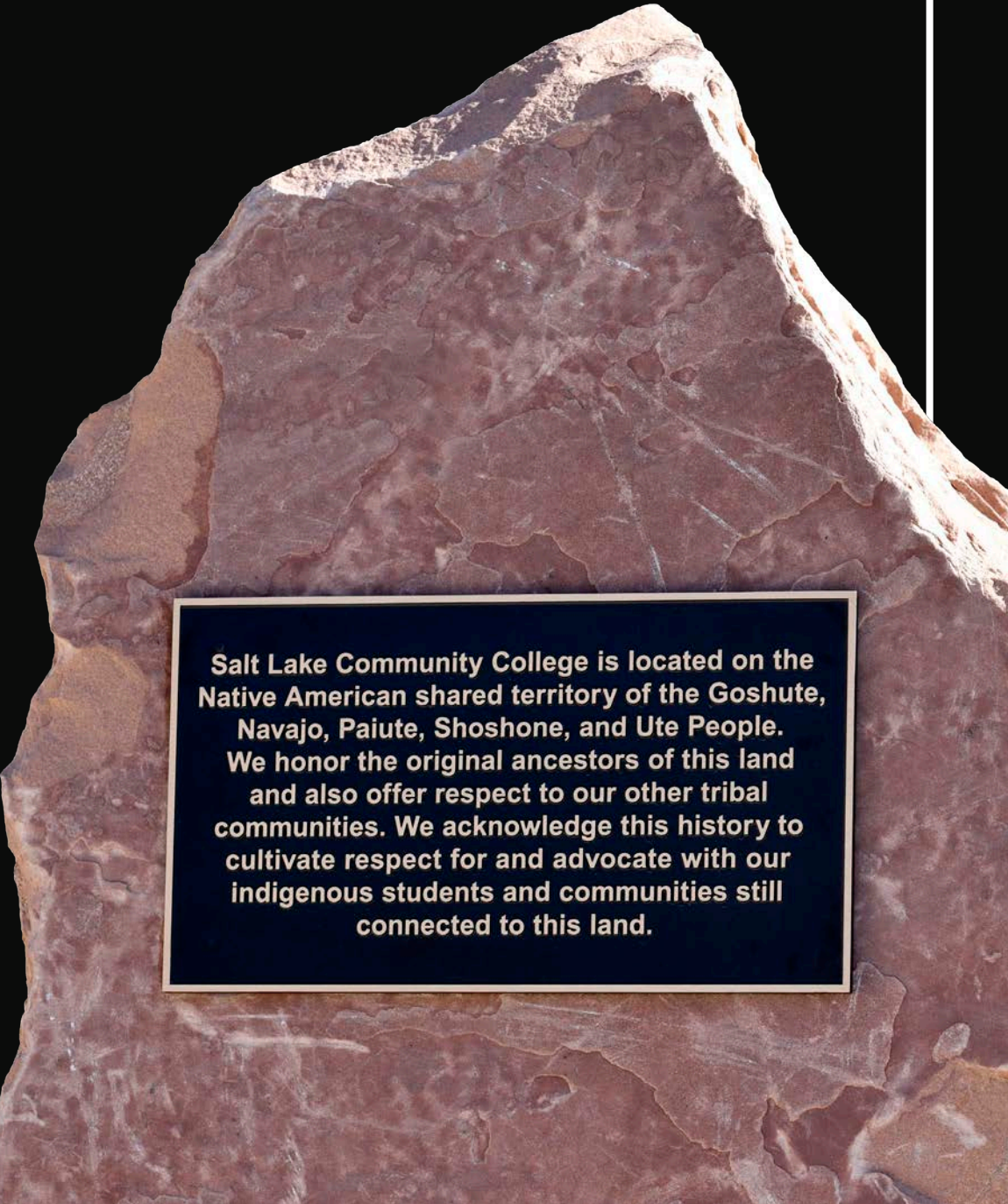
## Recognizing Indigenous Peoples

Plaques have been placed at several Salt Lake Community College locations that recognize the historical significance of land the college occupies and how it was once the shared territory of several Native American tribes.

“It recognizes and creates a greater visibility of the indigenous peoples of Utah,” says Orville Cayaditto, student success coordinator for American Indian and Native American students at SLCC’s Office of Diversity and Multicultural Affairs. “It is important to research and learn about the achievements and contributions of Indigenous peoples.”

The plaques can be found on the following SLCC campuses:

- Jordan Campus at the north entrance of the Jordan High Tech Center.
- South City Campus on the east side of the building, there are two plaques on entrance steps to the foyer.
- Taylorsville Redwood Campus by the Legacy Fountain, east of the Student Center.

A large, reddish-brown rock with a plaque on it. The rock is the central focus of the lower half of the page, with a white border around the plaque text.

**Salt Lake Community College is located on the Native American shared territory of the Goshute, Navajo, Paiute, Shoshone, and Ute People. We honor the original ancestors of this land and also offer respect to our other tribal communities. We acknowledge this history to cultivate respect for and advocate with our indigenous students and communities still connected to this land.**



**Volleyball player Sandora Sasaki participates during a Know Greater Heroes class.**

# Heroes Among Us

**Class strengthens athletes and kids in the community**

Alyssa Mighell, Jordan Scott and Aaliyah Ibarra had never broken through a solid wood board with their hands before taking the Know Greater Heroes class at Salt Lake Community College.

The physical act of using flesh and bone to break wood with only a few minutes of training seemed impossible – that is, until they, and more than 60 other student athletes, did it. The feat symbolized breaking through fears, self-doubt and stereotypes, all written on the board by participants. It was part of a weeklong buildup preparing the athletes to visit dozens of elementary schools throughout the Salt Lake Valley, where they lead high-energy, action-packed assemblies to teach children about proper nutrition, healthy exercise, making good decisions and succeeding in education.

The class, which SLCC began offering in 2005, is designed to engage student athletes in a type of learning that benefits the community and themselves as leaders.

“Being able to really look into what scares us the most in life, and then physically breaking those expectations was by far the most unique experience I’ve had in a classroom,” says Mighell, 18, a freshman

softball infielder recruited from Sydney, Australia. The psychology major expects to earn an associate’s degree by 2023 and transfer for a bachelor’s degree. “We proved to ourselves that things that may seem impossible just need a strategy and the drive to want to do the impossible.”

Heroes instructor and Volleyball Coach Shay Goulding Meurer hopes the three-credit class helps create a community for athletes across all sports at the college. “It is a real gift to see some of these student athletes really break through some fears and let go of the negative or limiting beliefs that are holding them back,” she says.

Lessons learned in the class tend to stick with many students long after they have left SLCC, she says. And students get out of it what they put in, like Aaliyah Ibarra, 19, a shooting guard on SLCC’s women’s basketball team. She wrote on her board about childhood abuse and suicidal thoughts. “Once I broke the board, I instantly started crying because I just felt such relief,” she says. When she heard they would be going into classrooms to teach what they learn, she felt a “warmth” in her heart. “I wish someone like me was telling me stuff like this when I was younger.”

# Lights, Camera, Action:

## SLCC graduates work in Utah's film industry

Devan Wetenkamp turned his experience as a film student at Salt Lake Community College into opportunity, parlaying an internship he landed through SLCC into a job he hopes will someday lead to his big break in the industry.

It's a story that plays out with more frequency these days: SLCC students qualify for increasingly available jobs with film-production technician skills learned at the college.

"Utah continues to grow as a hub for television and feature film production," says Virginia Pearce, director of the Utah Film Commission in the Utah Governor's Office of Economic Opportunity. "If you are just beginning in the film industry, you will most likely start out as a production assistant to one of the departments on set." It's an ideal way, she says, to learn about film production and network with people in the industry who often will connect you with your next job.

In fact, with almost 2,500 cast and crew jobs created in 2020 on films and television series in the Beehive State, it's a good time to break into the industry, she says. "The film program at SLCC is great for anyone looking to get some hands-on experience in playing with film gear and meeting people passionate about film," says Wetenkamp, 33. He expects to earn his certificate of proficiency in SLCC's Film Production Technician program in 2021.

In his warehouse job with Salt Lake City-based Redman Movies & Stories, Wetenkamp takes orders, like pulling cables and cords and fetching C-stands. It helps him maintain industry connections, pay bills and keep his ears open for the next opportunity to work on a movie set.

"I'm getting older, and I want to get into the industry as fast as I can," he says. SLCC's program is designed to be completed in three semesters, costing about \$6,000 to earn a certificate. A full associate's degree usually takes students between two and three years to complete, with classes that include directing and commercial production and a comprehensive project that often results in work that students may enter into film festivals.

Some students choose the certificate path so they can quickly get to work and continue toward earning an associate's degree. Their certificate credits are applied toward the two-year degree.

"Out in the field, people want to know you know what to do. That's why a technical education is so important," says Richard Scott, dean of SLCC's School of Arts, Communication & Media. Some students tap into the college's program for certain courses that earn them a Certificate of Achievement, something to diversify their skillsets and make them more marketable. As for finding steadier work, Scott says, businesses and corporations that hire for their own in-house production teams to handle digital and social media campaigns are a safer, more reliable bet for those seeking consistent employment.

Locally, graduates with SLCC film production experience get noticed. Every production that works in Utah hires local crew members and, if receiving an incentive from the state's Motion Picture Incentive Program, are required to hire at least 75% local cast and crew to qualify for the full incentive.

Nick Burns, associate dean for SLCC's Communication & Performing Arts program, has a list of about 1,700 students who have completed or are currently going through the college's Film Production certificate program. Many, Burns says, find great industry jobs with the skills they learned at SLCC.

## Center for Arts & Media at South City Campus

- Opened in 2013
- \$45 million to build
- 130,000 square feet
- 36-seat screening room
- 3,000-square-foot film stage
- 2,000-square-foot TV studio
- Music recording studio
- High-tech editing bays



## HOW TO GET THERE

### PROGRAM

Film Production Technician

### OPTIONS

Certificate of Proficiency, AAS degree

### DURATION

Certificate: three semesters

AAS degree: 69 credits, two years

### TUITION AND FEES

Certificate: \$6,000

AAS Degree: about \$8,171

### PAY RATE PER PRODUCTION JOB

\$150 to \$200 a day on smaller productions

\$500 to \$600 a day with bigger studios on larger productions (SLCC program administrators)

### AVERAGE BASE SALARY

\$43,972 (glassdoor.com)

## Alumna lands fellowship at Hollywood film institute

In what could be the biggest break of her creative career, former SLCC student Julia Freij was accepted as a fellow at the American Film Institute Conservatory (AFI) in California's Hollywood Hills.

"It's just the most amazing opportunity," says Freij, who graduated in 2018 with an Associate of Applied Science (AAS) degree in Film Production Technician. "I just need my foot in the door. And then, if I do that, there will be so many other doors."

AFI is ranked in the top three film schools in the United States along with University of Southern California and New York University. Thousands of aspiring filmmakers from all over the world apply to AFI each year. Relatively few (there are 120 fellows in Freij's class) are awarded the coveted two-year fellowships for AFI's producing, editing, cinematography, screenwriting, production design and directing tracks.

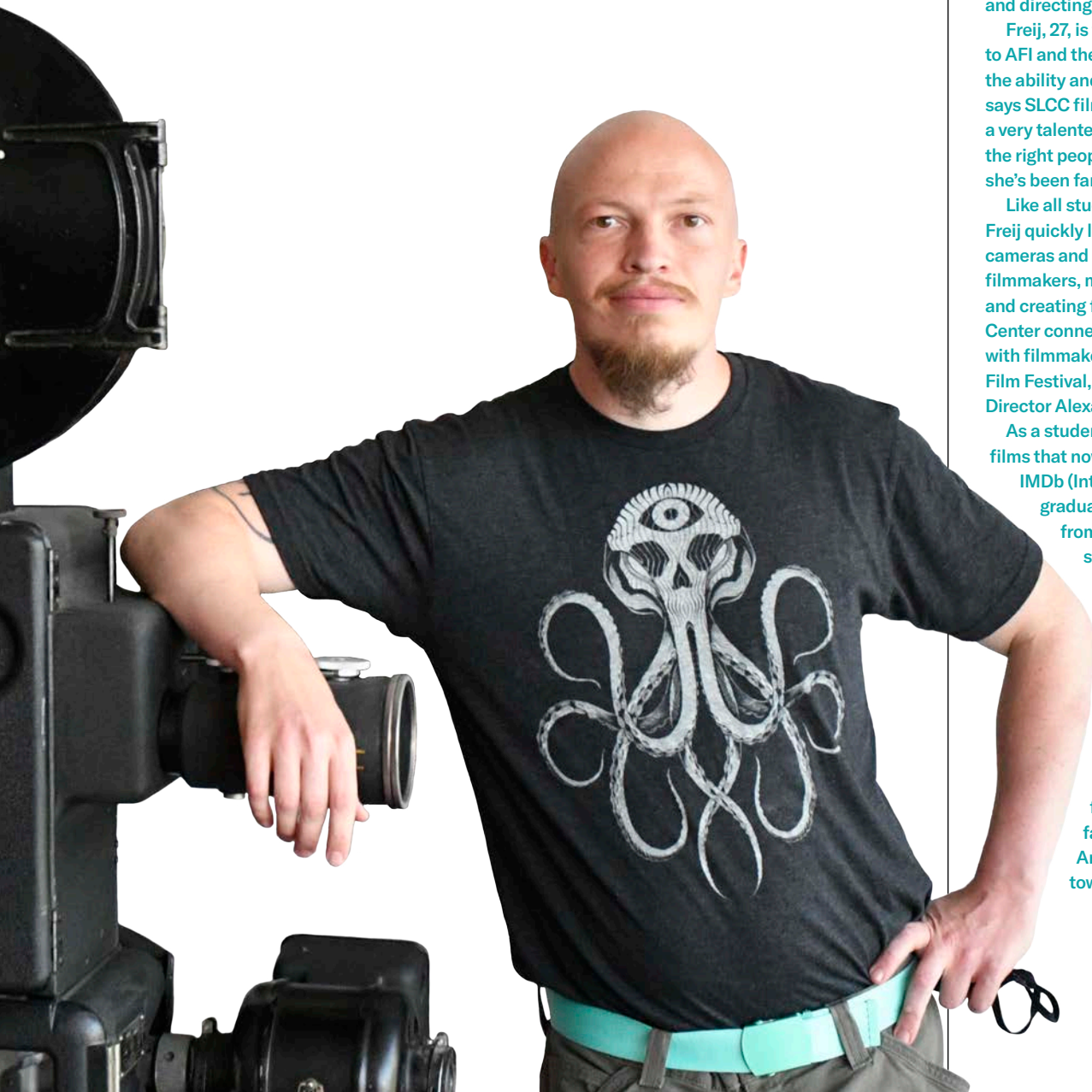
Freij, 27, is the first SLCC female to be accepted to AFI and the first in the directing track. "She has the ability and knowledge to pull together a film," says SLCC film instructor Channing Lowe. "She's a very talented director, and she's able to choose the right people to work on a project. That's where she's been fantastic."

Like all students in SLCC's film program, Freij quickly learned to handle some of the best cameras and equipment available to professional filmmakers, mastering in-demand technical skills and creating films. The college and the Utah Film Center connected her with an opportunity to intern with filmmakers during the 10-day Sundance Film Festival, and she hung with "This Is Home" Director Alexandra Shiva.

As a student, Freij completed several short films that now help get her noticed on her IMDb (Internet Movie Database) page. After graduating from SLCC, she found support from the college as an independent study student through access to resources, equipment and instruction while working on more projects.

With an associate's degree from SLCC, Freij is gunning for an AFI certificate of completion, culminating in a finished film she can submit to festivals.

Freij started in fall 2021 at AFI and in five years, hopes to be following in the footsteps of her favorite female director, Andrea Arnold, writing and directing her way toward her first feature film.



# Make Time to Think. Take Time to Do.

## Engaged, active learning prepares students for real-world challenges

Woven throughout SLCC programs and courses are high-impact practices and teaching that engage students by developing critical thinking, organizational and decision-making skills. “High-impact practices are better than traditional lecture-style learning because students are applying what they learn,” says SLCC Engaged Learning Coordinator Lucy Smith. Engaged learning can include lab research; service and community-based learning; service abroad and in other states; civic engagement in all academic disciplines;

intensive writing; and many more real-world, applied experiences. It’s impossible in these pages to fully illustrate the many ways SLCC instills in students a sense of service and learning through action, but the articles that follow encapsulate a small sampling of our best efforts to develop organizational, decision-making and critical-thinking skills in students. These are the foundational skills to pursue higher academic degrees and for lifelong success.







# It's Not Rocket Science, It's Better

## Hands-on learning engages students early

Mary Pendleton is growing tissue cultures in order to learn more about the rare CDKL5 Deficiency Disorder that causes her niece to have seizures. Cannon Gage is busy these days trying to get bone cells to expand onto a 3D structure while also working as an organic extraction specialist at a private lab. Mary Stagg, a mother of four, is learning lab skills at hyper-speed so she can quickly transition to a full-time job in a biotech laboratory and, as a first-generation student, set an example for her children. All three have one thing in common: They are students at Salt Lake Community College participating in hands-on research and learning typically not available for even four-year students until much later in their studies.

### MAKING A DIFFERENCE

Pendleton, 30, who has a bachelor's degree in elementary education, wants to become a doctor, possibly in pediatrics. She's learning in a SLCC lab to look at and edit genetic material using CRISPR technology, which incorporates a family of DNA sequences found in the genomes of prokaryotic organisms. "It's been very empowering. It's definitely something I didn't expect, for this to capture my attention. This has become a big focal point of my experience," says Pendleton.

For Gage, 22, his dream job is to become a pilot, but his backup plan is lab work, and he's on track to graduate from SLCC in 2022. He hopes to get as much lab time as possible. "As students, we can take the lead and get help from teachers. I have been exposed to 3D printing and how to combine biology and technology." The college's InnovaBio program affords participating students like Gage as much lab time as is available to move them along more rapidly.

Stagg, 36, is so engrossed with lab work at SLCC, she may complete three course levels in one semester, demonstrating proficiency along the way. "I like that they throw you into it right away," she says. "I don't think it's intimidating — frustrating at times, and I need to repeat experiments, but it's those failures that set you up with the truth of what you will experience when you're employed."

### SLCC LEADING THE WAY

Before arriving at SLCC two years ago, Dr. Lane Law, manager of SLCC's STEM Laboratory at its Jordan Campus, had experience in academic, industry and government labs. The quality of resources available to first- and second-year

students at SLCC immediately struck him. "Having cell culture experiences as an undergrad is unheard of," he says. The labs are state-of-the-art and opportunities for students are beyond those of much larger institutions.

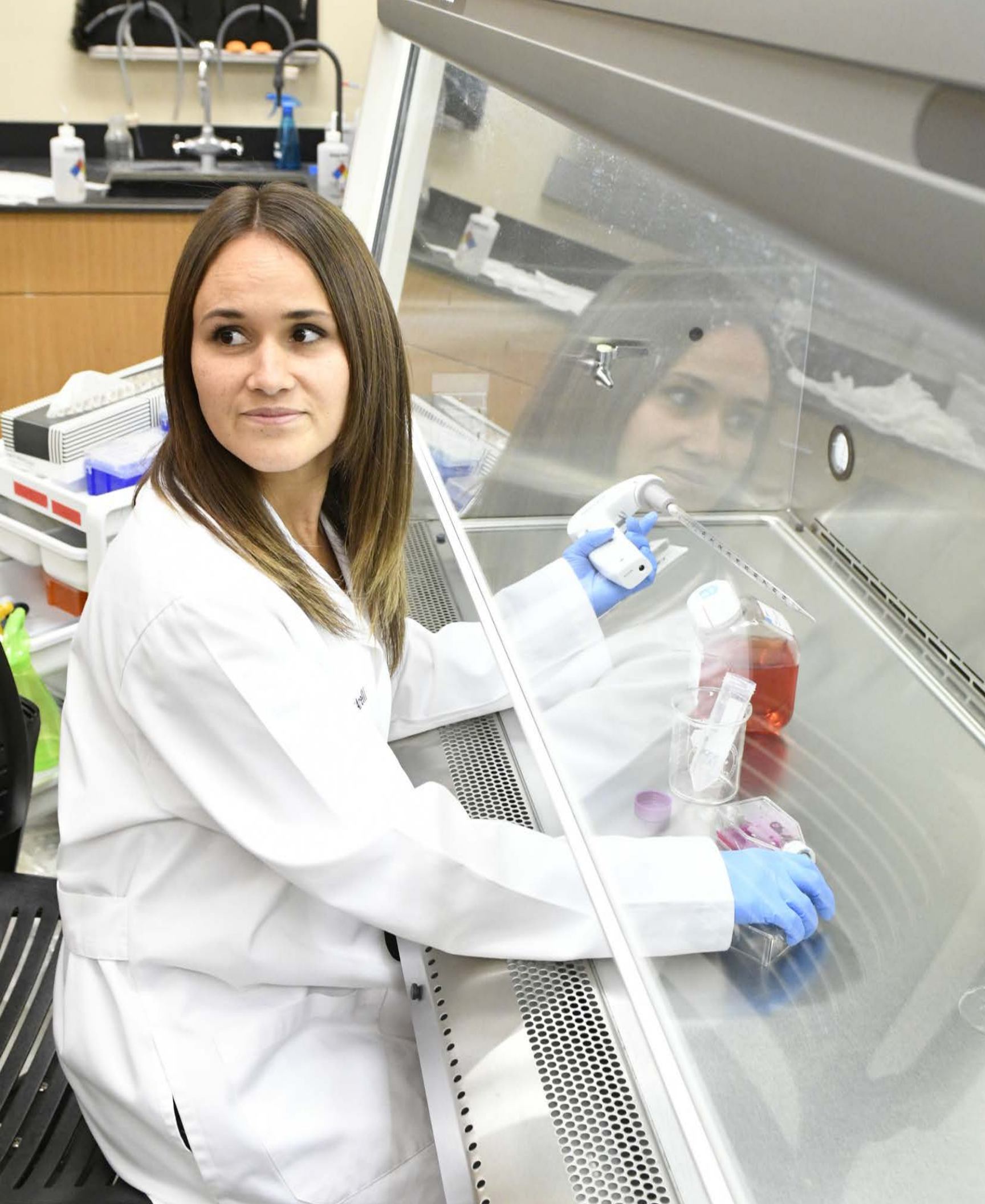
Dr. Jean Bower, chair of SLCC's Biotechnology Department, agrees. She recalls having to teach juniors and seniors at a four-year research institution the basic technique of pipetting (using a pipette to transfer a measured amount of liquid). However, students in SLCC labs learn the technique right away, she says. SLCC students are far more advanced in the lab than their peers elsewhere, even at places such as Duke University, Bower says. "They may know theory better than our students, but we are training students to do hands-on work. It's what they want to do more than memorizing from a book."

In 2016, Dr. Bower used funds from a National Science Foundation grant to move the entire biotechnology program to a competency-based format that features an open-lab environment. This has helped students, such as Stagg, to progress quickly. She can earn either an associate's degree or certificate of proficiency in far less time than the traditional two-year track that had limited assigned lab times.

**"It's been very empowering. This has become a big focal point of my experience."**

Another recent innovation that further sets SLCC apart is the addition of a proposal writing class, STEM 2010. It focuses on mentoring students to develop their own proposals rather than feeding them a project that already has built-in theories, tests and conclusions. "That's different than anything else I've encountered," says Dr. Craig Caldwell, dean of SLCC's School of Science, Math and Engineering. Historically, it's been a struggle to get students into undergrad research projects, he says, but this class gives them space and time to develop and think about what they're interested in and want to spend time on.

Mary Pendleton works in the lab to grow tissue cultures.



Student Meghan Zonts pauses in her search for data into bird-window collisions outside of the Science & Industry Building on the Taylorsville Redwood Campus.



# Bird-Window Collisions on Campuses Offer Research Opportunities for Students

## Hands-on work teaches scientific method

Meghan Zonts is hoping the field work she's doing now will help her become a better researcher — and maybe save the lives of a few birds along the way.

Zonts, 24, is one of several Salt Lake Community College students helping assistant biology professor Corey Riding identify and catalog where on SLCC's campuses birds are dying due to window collisions. They search the perimeters of buildings, find bird carcasses and log all the pertinent information. "I've never done research like this before," says Zonts, whose dream job is to become a travel nurse. "I expect to do more research in my professional life, so hopefully, with more practice, I'll become better at it."

The problem of bird-window collisions is nothing new — it's been around since buildings came with glass windows — but it's getting worse all the time. Riding points to the most recent research that estimates the annual "window mortality" of birds at somewhere between 365 million to as many as 988 million just in the United States alone.

An outdoors and wildlife enthusiast, Riding began digging into the problem for his doctoral research at Oklahoma State University. When he was hired

by SLCC in 2019, he brought his ongoing interest in bird-window collisions and has been seeking student volunteers ever since. "I'm trying to provide students opportunities to participate in meaningful research," Riding says. "This is something they could put on their academic resumes."

Riding provides four YouTube videos for training, and once students are ready, they head out into the field, learning about what factors affect collisions, whether

collisions can be predicted and the impact of lighting at night. So far, the data shows that the Academic & Administration and the Science & Industry buildings on the Taylorsville Redwood Campus are the deadliest for birds. The goal is to eventually propose mitigation measures to help unwitting birds better identify the presence of windows before they run into them.

For Zonts, sharing her research with her fiancé's family

has already resulted in them putting stickers on their windows, and she thinks SLCC could do the same. "Because of the taxonomic hierarchy and where we stand in it as humans, we have an obligation to take care of the other species that don't get as much of a say of what happens here on planet Earth," she says.

“  
This is something  
they could put on  
their academic  
resumes.  
”



**Corey Riding (above) and student Meghan Zonts can be found around perimeters of buildings scanning for birds on the ground.**

# Students Published Professionally, Building Real World Skills

## Journalism program links with mainstream news outlets

When Cristian Martinez saw his byline for the first time in The Salt Lake Tribune, it instantly energized his drive to pursue a journalism degree at Salt Lake Community College. “The only person who was more excited about the publication than me was my mom,” says Martinez, 21. With his first story, he tapped into controversy at the college over the spelling of “womxn,” replacing the letter “e” to account for trans women.

Martinez’s first and, since then, second story, along with several of his classmates’ stories, might not have appeared in The Tribune had it not been for a unique collaboration between his SLCC instructor Marcie Young Cancio and editors at the newspaper.

In July 2020, Young Cancio, who teaches Comm 1130, Journalism and News Writing, started the nonprofit Amplify Utah as a means of linking talent in her classroom with storytelling about diversity, equity and inclusion to a broader audience.

“The Salt Lake Tribune is the first legacy news organization to transition to a nonprofit model, and we see our partnership with Amplify Utah as a way to advance both our mission and our journalism,” says Lauren Gustus, executive editor at The Tribune. The partnership brings real-world expertise into the classroom and shepherds students’ reporting through the professional editing process at the newspaper.

Funding for the focused collaboration between Amplify and The Tribune comes from the newspaper’s Google News Initiative Grant. Young Cancio is trying to use Amplify to tell students’ stories through

a variety of media outlets in Utah, but The Tribune stories have been the highest profile examples so far.

Many communities have been underserved or even ignored by traditional media in Utah, including by The Salt Lake Tribune, says Will Neville-Rehbehn, executive director for Organizational Advancement at The Tribune. He also serves on Amplify’s board. “It matters when someone can draw from their own lived experience to tell stories from and with marginalized communities, rather than reporting about them from the outside,” he says.

This past summer SLCC journalism student Andrew Christiansen, 20, told Tribune readers the story of the college’s prison education program receiving an anonymous donation of laptop computers to keep classes going during the coronavirus pandemic. “I’ve never worked that hard on a story,” he says.

Likewise, Comm 1130 student Samantha Herrera, 23, received Tribune coverage of her story, “Living ‘in between’: How children navigate two cultures at once.” That story alone helped Herrera hone her interview approach. “I think just listening, asking a person to tell me their story, was the most important skill I learned,” she says.

“...we see our partnership with Amplify Utah as a way to advance both our mission and our journalism.”



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# New SLCC Honors Program Breaks the Mold

**Key components include engaged curiosity and diverse populations**

When Jessica Ducuara graduates in spring 2022, she'll be among the first to do so with an Honors Program designation on her degree and transcript from Salt Lake Community College.

The new program differs from traditional honors programs by primarily focusing on diverse and underserved populations. Planners hope it better qualifies students for scholarships and admission to four-year schools.

"It has not only encouraged me to expand my knowledge through discipline and persistence, but it also guides students to turn their talents into valuable tools in a world of constant change," Ducuara says.

SLCC has partnered with the University of Utah (U of U) to provide a seamless transfer into the university's Honors College, as well as scholarships and housing opportunities at U of U. The first SLCC cohort of honors students was admitted in fall 2020, and there are now about 50 honors students enrolled. More courses, honors professors and mentorship opportunities will be added as the program gains momentum.

As a cohort, students take nine credits of honors courses that satisfy the Social Sciences, Humanities and the second half of Composition General Education requirements. "General Education courses are built into the Honors Program rather than requiring additional hours to achieve Honors designation," says Michael Young, associate dean of General Education, Honors, and Interdisciplinary Studies.

Honors Program Coordinator Kathy Tran-Peters recognizes that traditional honors programs have not generally

served first-generation, LGBTQ+, low income or racially minoritized students, or students with disabilities. She points out that they have typically benefited the wealthy and elite. "It is more critical than ever that SLCC's new Honors Program be designed with equity-mindedness and intentionality for inclusivity, diversity and accessibility," she says.

There are no GPA or SAT/ACT requirements for admission to SLCC's Honors Program. Instead, it focuses

more on students who demonstrate a "curious intellect, passion for learning, interest in engaging in the honors curriculum and the honors community, and students who want to engage in undergraduate research, service learning and internships," says Tran-Peters.

The program is recruiting and focused on retaining diverse honors students, faculty and staff who reflect the communities the program serves. It's designed to eliminate financial barriers through tuition waivers, scholarships, internships and student employment for participants like Ducuara.

"Being in the honors program," says Ducuara, "is like walking through the first door into a splendid professional world." She is working toward her associate's

degree in journalism and plans on transferring to the U of U for a bachelor's degree in the same discipline. She is also an Honors Program peer mentor.

**To learn more about the new SLCC Honors Program, visit [slcc.edu/honors](http://slcc.edu/honors).**

**Michael Young (l-r), Kathy Tran-Peters and Jessica Ducuara.**

“  
Being in the  
honors program  
is like walking  
through the  
first door into a  
splendid profes-  
sional world.  
”

# Online Optimization

## ePortfolios instill real-world skills engaging students to think critically and decisively

Zamzam Ahmed plans to be a nurse when she graduates from Salt Lake Community College in May 2022. Afterward, she may get a master's degree in midwifery or enroll in medical school.

Defining and prioritizing these goals isn't easy, and they're likely to evolve, but creating an ePortfolio at SLCC helped this 20-year-old focus on her future.

"The most important way it helped me was to reflect," says Ahmed, "on my strengths, my weaknesses, what I've done well, what I can improve on."

She is one of many who've created ePortfolios since SLCC started requiring it for general education students 11 years ago. These online ePortfolios showcase students' skills and accomplishments and are useful when starting careers and job hunting. They're creating long-term success in college, in the workplace and in life.

Creating an ePortfolio helps students think more deeply and critically and enables them to be more articulate in expressing what they're learning and how they're applying knowledge, explains ePortfolio Coordinator Emily Dibble.

Students learn prioritization, organization and presentation skills when creating online ePortfolios. They must highlight at least one signature assignment from each of their courses and write and post a detailed reflection about that assignment or course.

Structured reflection, according to the Association of American Colleges and Universities (AACU), helps students analyze their learning experiences to reveal and understand outcomes.

AACU research shows ePortfolios broaden student knowledge, intellect and practical skills.

"It definitely helps them be more engaged," says Dibble. "They make connections between different courses, connections between their courses and in their personal lives, and they think about how they are applying the skills they've learned in their various courses."

SLCC faculty also create ePortfolios as part of their tenure process and review General Education at the college annually by evaluating samples of student portfolios to assess learning outcomes.

While creating an ePortfolio helped Ahmed reflect and focus on goals, she also applied for and was awarded one of two tuition waivers for ePortfolios covering full tuition for fall 2021.

"I don't know where my goals end," Ahmed says. "I don't think they end. You can never stop learning no matter how much you know."



**ePortfolio has helped student Zamzam Ahmed improve her weaknesses and reflect on her strengths.**

### EPORTFOLIOS AT SLCC

- Piloted in late 2000s; First required in 2010
- Required for students in General Education courses
- Other academic courses also require ePortfolios for students
- Students create ePortfolios through online platform digication.com
- Three labs are available to assist students in creating ePortfolios
- 172,000 SLCC students have created ePortfolios in the last five years





# Connecting Classes with Community

## How serving others helps improve success in the classroom

When Ashlen Frederickson enrolled in English 1010 at Salt Lake Community College, she expected lectures, note-taking, reading and writing assignments, and of course, tests. Instead, Frederickson found herself engaged in service learning, an extracurricular activity that has unexpectedly emerged as a key component of her academic success and a way to gain valuable critical thinking skills.

“Working on a project for the Boys and Girls Club helped me focus because it was a real-life problem,” says Frederickson. “Doing things like reviewing their website helped me learn to break things down and work step by step through challenges.”

Engaged Learning Coordinator Lucy Smith describes service learning as “the integration of community service into an academic setting with high impact outcomes.” More than 70 classes at the college are designated as service learning courses. Any course at SLCC that meets the criteria set forth by the Faculty Senate Curriculum Committee can be designated as a service learning class through the Office of Engaged Learning.

Students in classes designated “service learning” participate in an academically focused project with a community partner during the semester. Projects vary according to the types of services rendered, the different professors and their curriculum, students’ own creativity and the needs of participating nonprofit organizations.

English professor Daniel Baird says he sees students being more “invested” in their education when connecting coursework with service learning. “Concepts are retained

and more apt to stick with the students compared to more traditional methods for learning,” he says. Baird’s students pick organizations vetted through the Thayne Center and then work with that organization to identify and meet specific needs and advance students’ academic skills.

Despite the pandemic curbing service learning opportunities at the college as many nonprofit organizations shut down volunteer programs, Smith says she is excited for a future that includes plans to change the term service learning to community engaged learning. “The term community engaged learning better reflects the process,” says Smith.

For years Frederickson pursued the dream of becoming a nurse, a field she picked because of her desire to help people. She found that dream drifting away

as she struggled with classes and learning. She lacked confidence and, with her ADHD, the ability to concentrate and work through problems. Taking a service learning class at SLCC helped change that. “I found joy in topics like American history because I could tie it into my real world. It opened up the door in my brain to ask, ‘How will this apply?’,”

which is critical thinking at its core,” says Frederickson.

Frederickson has taken two more service learning classes and with each one continues to grow. “The positive feedback I got as I did the projects helped me gain the confidence I needed to keep going with my education,” she said. “I’ve gone from a struggling student who couldn’t pass the core classes I needed to be a nurse to an A student on the Dean’s and President’s lists.”

“  
The positive feedback I got  
as I did the projects helped  
me gain the confidence I  
needed to keep going with  
my education.”

Ashlen Frederickson (left) says engaged learning has helped her become an A student.

# EQUITY, DIVERSITY AND INCLUSIVITY FUNDING

Salt Lake Community College actively pursues public funding that fosters equity, diversity and inclusivity (EDI) through 27 grants totaling \$15.6 million dollars. EDI funding supports an estimated 4,375 students from underserved populations through Active Sponsored Projects. These projects are developed and directed by principal investigators, including faculty, staff and administrators.

Overseen by the Office of Sponsored Projects, these projects include grants, contracts, designations, waivers and other instruments externally bestowed to an institution and are subject to public grant regulations.



**4,375**  
STUDENTS SUPPORTED

**15.6**  
MILLION DOLLARS

**27**  
GRANTS

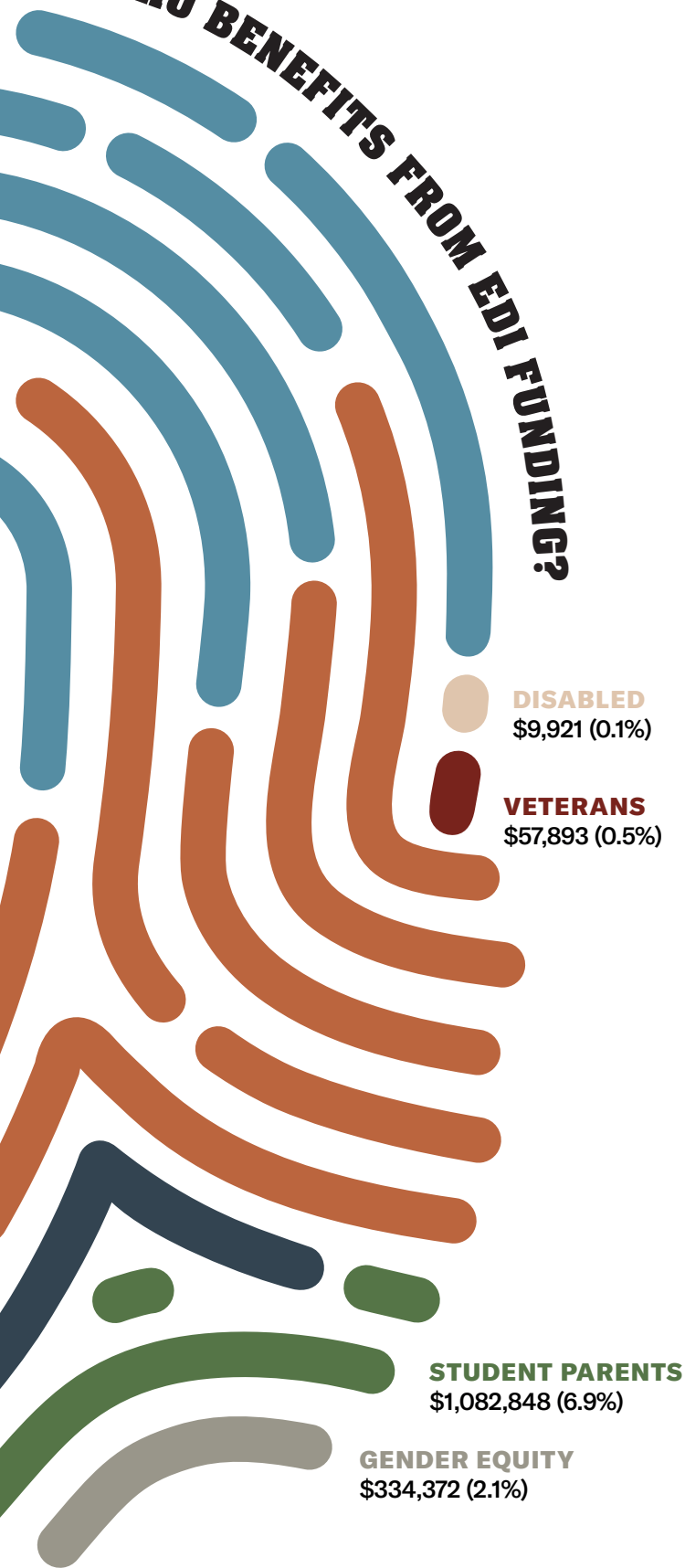
**LOW-INCOME**  
\$7,186,258 (46.0%)

**MARGINALIZED POPULATIONS\***  
\$5,439,850 (34.8%)

**MINORITIES**  
\$1,503,688 (9.6%)

\* "Marginalized populations" is an umbrella category and can encompass several of the other beneficiary categories noted here. It's used in a grant when a specific category, such as minority, low-income or disabled, isn't identified.

## WHO BENEFITS FROM EDI FUNDING?



## WHY FUND EDI PROJECTS?

### EQUITY

Identify and address inequality at the college

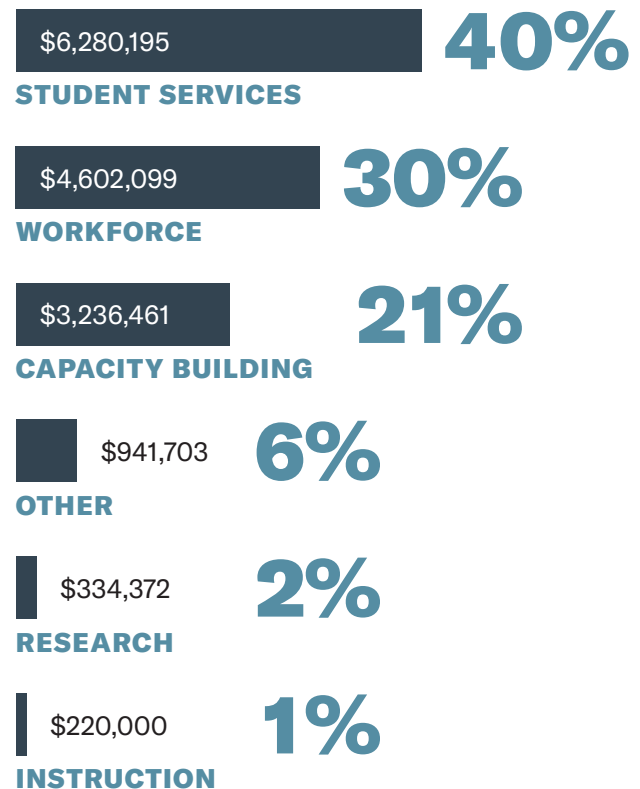
### DIVERSITY

Encourage and increase meaningful participation by diverse students, employees or other members of the college community in college life

### INCLUSIVITY

Empower students, employees and other members of the college community by recognizing and valuing the inherent worth and dignity of all people

## WHAT ARE THE IMPACTS?



## SLCC College-Readiness Expands for Underserved

### PACE celebrates decade of high school success

Juan Perez-Vega graduated from West High School in June 2021 and is already on his way to earning a bachelor's degree in mechanical engineering, one of hundreds of first-generation students guided to college through an impactful program at Salt Lake Community College.

The 18-year-old is now taking classes at SLCC with a PACE scholarship, but his college pathway began four years earlier as a freshman in high school. Like hundreds before him in the Salt Lake Valley, he credits PACE, the Partnership for Accessing College Education, with helping bridge a widening divide between high school and college.

Celebrating its 10th year, PACE concentrates on empowering and supporting underserved youth to prepare them for college. It started with a mere seven students at West High in 2011 and has grown to serve more than 430 PACE scholars.

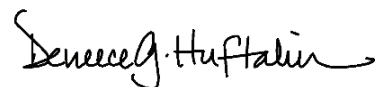
PACE high school students average a 3.4 GPA and it's estimated that the program is responsible for a 25% increase in the college completion rate over the past 10 years among scholars who finish the program. More than 90% of SLCC PACE scholars identify as ethnically and/or racially diverse; 80% are first in their families to attend college and come from low-income households; and 67% are female. These numbers are encouraging as SLCC looks to spread PACE success to other high schools in the Salt Lake Valley, helping lift underserved populations.

When they start at SLCC, vital support from advisers and faculty continues and most PACE students earn two-year degrees. Many transfer to four-year schools to earn bachelor's degrees and some continue on to get master's degrees while others enter careers in Utah.

Salt Lake Community College maintains PACE with generous support from the State of Utah and donations from community leaders, corporations, private foundations and individuals from across the state. I'm confident this support will continue as PACE proves to be a vital benefit to the entire region. The program reinforces SLCC's commitment to make a difference in the lives of students, families and communities.

And what about Perez-Vega? This hard-working young man continues to pursue his associate's degree at SLCC while working at rail-car manufacturer Stadler Rail through another SLCC partnership, Talent Ready Apprenticeship Connection. He's on track to get his degree and a meaningful career as an engineer with a growing company. Hats off to his dedication and determination and to those in PACE and at West High who helped him along the way!

At SLCC, we plan to replicate his success by the thousands.



Dr. Denece G. Huftalin  
Salt Lake Community College President



2021 PACE  
graduates

### HOW PACE WORKS

- Freshmen at the five high schools are invited to apply and must be first in their families to attend college and/or demonstrate a financial need.
- Students and their families then commit to a set of college-preparatory activities that take place over four years, including attendance, a 2.5 GPA and advanced coursework.
- Throughout high school, PACE scholars are supported by SLCC counselors and have access to career-exploration opportunities.
- Upon successful PACE completion in high school, graduates are guaranteed a full scholarship to SLCC for six semesters.

SLCC PACE  
Scholar Juan  
Perez-Vega





## **College-prep expands to Kearns High School** Mark and Kathie Miller generously funded the program

Mark Miller knows maintaining quality standards can come down to one individual. He recalls a tour of a Toyota RAV4 plant in Japan. Pull cords hung from every stage of the production line, and anyone working could pull a cord to report a problem, shutting down manufacturing but fixing the issue in the moment.

That commitment to quality left an impression on Miller he tries to live every day. He and Kathie, his wife of 46 years, recently made the largest single private investment in the history of SLCC's PACE program, to provide a quality college-prep education to students at Kearns High School.

The Mark and Kathie Miller PACE Scholars Program opened in the fall, welcoming an inaugural cohort of 30 freshmen. The Millers' gift provides critical startup resources for the program's fifth high school site and seeds scholarship funds for future PACE grads.

Miller, a self-described professional volunteer, learned much about America's educational system through his volunteer efforts with local nonprofits. He and Kathie served on several boards, prompting him to create volunteer programs at local elementary and middle schools.

The results have been impressive: at Kearns Junior High, for example, a program he helped develop raised students' math skills by one to two grade levels. In partnership with curriculum provider iReady, he hopes to scale a program at Millcreek Elementary to six other schools.

Miller believes in providing the resources to help people succeed. "I am good at giving people the ball and letting them run with it," he says. "PACE, in effect, does the same thing: providing an opportunity for students who want to succeed to get on a fast-track to do better."

# Extra Credit

Celebrating accomplishments from SLCC faculty and staff



**COREY RIDING**  
Biology assistant professor

Riding researched and co-authored "Multi-scale temporal variation of bird window collisions in the central United States," published in May 2021 in *Scientific Reports* and "Predicting bird-window collisions with weather radar," published in January 2021 in the *Journal of Applied Ecology*.



**DR. POOK CARSON**  
Business Management professor

Carson authored "The Relationship between Unemployment and State-Level Voting in Presidential Elections: Why Hard Times Do Not Favor Democrats," published in the *Journal of Business and Social Science Review*. The article shows that higher unemployment increases turnout but has a limited net effect in most states.



**DR. ANTHONY NOCELLA**  
Criminal Justice assistant professor

Nocella, book series editor of "Radical Animal Studies and Total Liberation," published "Critical Pedagogical Strategies to Transcend Hegemonic Masculinity," by Peter Lang Publishing in February 2021. It presents educational strategies for combating the harmful effects of hegemonic masculinity in the college classroom.



**ZACHARY CURTIS**  
Theater program director, associate professor

Curtis' first play, "Taro: The Legend of Urashima Taro," co-written with Amy Hollon, was published by *Next Stage Press*. Adapted from the Japanese Folktale of Urashima Taro, the hour-long children's play follows the adventures of Urashima Taro as he travels under the ocean to the palace of the sea princess, battles a dragon, rescues the moon and learns the value of time and family.



**DR. VICKY F. RANDS**  
Biology assistant professor

Rands and three peers from other schools researched collaborative group learning. The study titled "Implementing Guided Inquiry Active Learning in an Online Synchronous Classroom and its Impact on Test Question Performance" was published in August 2021 in peer-reviewed *HAPS Educator*.



**DR. XIN ZHAO**  
Psychology assistant professor

Zhao, OER Facult Fellow in the Office of Faculty Development and Transformational Educational Initiatives, was awarded a research fellowship with the Open Ed Group to study the impact of Open Educational Resources, such as the college's OPEN SLCC, which provides free texts and materials to save students money on costly textbooks.



**MARIAN DORA HOWE-TAYLOR**  
School of Arts, Communication & Media special projects manager

Howe-Taylor was honored in September by YWCA Utah for her efforts in promoting racial equity and social justice. She was honored with an Outstanding Achievement Award for her lifelong commitment to strengthening understanding of history, calling out injustices and creating inclusive and just spaces.



**DR. NANCY BARRICKMAN**  
Biology associate professor

Barrickman, with others, studied whether social anxiety and the confidence to overcome academic challenges interact with student perceptions of instructional practices and affect their grades in a STEM-related course. The student, "I like and prefer to work alone"; social anxiety, academic self-efficacy, and students' perceptions of active learning," was published in February 2021 in *CBE-Life Sciences Education*.



**MELANEY BIRDSONG FARR**  
Biology professor

Farr conducted research with five others as part of a larger National Science Foundation-funded study on community college Anatomy and Physiology education. Titled "The Impact of a Bookend Think-Pair-Share Intervention on Anxiety and Student Collaboration in a Community College Human Physiology Course," this study investigated the impact of an active learning technique on student anxiety, collaboration and course grades. Results were published in 2020 in peer-reviewed *HAPS Educator*.

*experiential*

# “Allow others to help you”

School of Science, Mathematics and Engineering

**NAME:** Tiffany Hilton

**WHAT SHE TEACHES:** Math 1040

**NUMBER OF YEARS TEACHING AT SLCC:** 11

**UNDERGRADUATE:** Brigham Young University

**MASTER'S DEGREE:** Colorado State University

**WHY WORKING AT SLCC MATTERS:**

I love teaching students who want to learn and overcome obstacles, and who work hard to do so.

**GREATEST PROFESSIONAL CHALLENGE:**

Helping students who have had bad experiences with math courses or math teachers in the past realize they can understand and succeed.

**GREATEST PROFESSIONAL ACCOMPLISHMENT:**

I'm currently fulfilling a one-year, full-time assignment to create a new course at SLCC (Math 1045) that will incorporate both algebra and statistics concepts. It's been a great collaborative effort to produce materials that will benefit students.

**ADVICE FOR STUDENTS AND OTHERS:**

In both school and life, allow others to help you. Be the kind of person who helps others and let others do the same for you.

**FUTURE PLANS:**

I'm also looking forward to going back to adjunct status. My favorite part of working at SLCC is interacting with students, so I'm looking forward to getting to focus more on that again.





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