

Al Smith Receives Inaugural Emma Eccles Jones Endowed Deanship

06/04/2024



Endowed Dean Al Smith

Dean Alan L. Smith in the Emma Eccles Jones College of Education and Human Services will be honored at the inaugural investiture as the first Emma Eccles Jones Endowed Dean at USU on June 10, 2024, at 3 pm in the David B. Haight Center on the USU campus.

“The establishment of the first deanship at Utah State University in the Emma Eccles Jones College of Education and Human Services is a milestone of immense significance. It provides focused leadership and strategic vision essential for academic excellence and institutional growth. An endowed deanship ensures sustained leadership and resources to drive innovation, supporting long-term planning and ambitious projects that impact both our students and the broader community,” said Matt White, vice president of Advancement and president of the USU Foundation. “The Emma Eccles Jones Foundation’s contributions have left an indelible mark on USU, elevating the educational experience, fostering innovation and preserving legacies of excellence.”

An endowed deanship is a milestone of significance for any university. This deanship will ensure that the college not only meets, but exceeds the highest standards of education and research, positioning faculty, staff, and students of the college as leaders in their fields.

Such an endowment establishes sustained leadership and provides the necessary resources to drive innovation. This financial security supports long-term planning and ambitious projects with far-reaching impacts on students and the broader community.

The legacy of Emma Eccles Jones and the foundation bearing her name exemplifies the long-term impact of endowed support. Since 1927, the foundation’s contributions, totaling more than \$47.6 million, have profoundly shaped the College of Education and Human Services, which is named in her honor. Its unwavering dedication to education led to the construction of key buildings and the creation of the Emma Eccles Jones Endowed Deanship. Though she passed away in 1991, Emma’s legacy continues to benefit countless students and educators.

Under the visionary leadership of Smith, the college continues to grow, bringing on new faculty who collaborate across disciplines to address critical issues such as health and educational disparities. Smith’s efforts are instrumental in fostering a collaborative environment where innovative solutions can be developed. This interdisciplinary approach is vital in addressing complex challenges and making a meaningful difference in our communities.

“The Emma Eccles Jones Endowed Deanship will have an immeasurable positive impact on our college, directly supporting our faculty, staff, and students in their efforts to enrich lives,” says Smith.

For the past 24 years, the college has been consecutively ranked number one in graduate school programs in education in the State of Utah and is among the top 30 graduate school programs in the nation. This recognition reflects its unwavering dedication to excellence and its profound impact on education and human services.

Smith was appointed dean of the Emma Eccles Jones College of Education and Human Services in July of 2021 and is a first-generation college student. Prior to joining Utah State, he held professorships at Purdue University and was chairperson of the Department of Kinesiology at Michigan State University. His academic journey includes a bachelor’s degree in psychology from the University of Rochester, a master’s degree in exercise and sport science from the University of North Carolina at Greensboro, and a doctorate in exercise and movement science from the University of Oregon.

Under Smith’s leadership, the college has made noteworthy strides. One achievement is securing funding from the Utah State Legislature to create the Alzheimer’s Disease and Dementia Research Center. (ADRC). The ADRC provides grant opportunities and other resources to stimulate dementia research in the state and support increased access to services for people living with Alzheimer’s disease and related dementias, as well

as their caregivers. It connects academic institutions, rural communities, and other health and human service agencies to maximize collaborative potential.

Additionally, Smith has overseen the expansion of the college's nursing program's footprint and student capacity, doubling the number of nursing students accepted into the program by adding the new Emma Eccles Jones Advanced Nursing Education suite located in the Health, Physical Education, and Recreation Building

For more information or to RSVP for Dean Smith's investiture, please email Amber Summers-Graham at amber.summers@usu.edu.