

Dean Al Smith and the Emma Eccles Jones Foundation Honored at the Inaugural Endowed Deanship Investiture

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President Elizabeth Cantwell formally invests Dean Al Smith with endowed deanship.

The inaugural investiture of the Emma Eccles Jones Endowed Deanship for Dean Al Smith was held on the USU campus on June 10, 2024. The investiture marks the first endowed deanship in the Emma Eccles Jones College of Education and Human Services and at Utah State University. Speakers at the event recognized the impact the endowment, under the leadership of Endowed Dean Al Smith, will have on the college for many years to come.

Matt White, vice president for Advancement and president of the USU Foundation, said, "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 our College of Education and Human Services. Their unwavering commitment to education led to the construction of key buildings and the creation of the Emma Eccles Jones Endowed Deanship we celebrate today."

The Very Reverend Frederick Q. Lawson, an ordained priest in the Anglican Communion and grandnephew of Emma Eccles Jones, serves on the board of the Emma Eccles Jones Foundation. Lawson praised Dean Smith's continued emphasis on enriching the lives of students in the college.

"This event is the crowning moment of the relationship between the Emma Eccles Jones Foundation and Utah State University," said Lawson. "Dean Smith brings to this wonderful college the knowledge and ability to further enhance and lead the college to even higher accolades. His passion for excellence is quickly obvious in any conversation with him and I'm not sure but it may be that his motto could be or may be even this: this college exists to serve and help students reach their highest potential."

Under Smith's leadership, the college has already made noteworthy strides. One achievement is securing funding from the Utah State Legislature to create the Alzheimer's Disease and Dementia Research Center. 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.



Endowed Dean Smith

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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. The ribbon-cutting ceremony for the suite occurred just hours prior to the investiture.

In his remarks, the newly endowed dean spoke metaphorically about his current role as dean and his responsibility to guide the college in keeping with the vision of its namesake, Emma Eccles Jones. "As a former track athlete, I can appreciate that I have received the baton in strong position, and that it will be passed on in due course to another," said Smith. "I am thankful to my predecessors in the dean role, who with the support of the Emma Eccles Jones Foundation have built a robust,

impactful, and enviable college. While I possess the baton, I will endeavor to move us forward with good pace, widen the gap a bit on our competition, and do so with the kind of grace exemplified by Emma Eccles Jones.”

The newly awarded endowed deanship ensures that the college not only meets but exceeds the highest standards of education and research. 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 both students and the broader community.