

WOMEN'S COUNCIL NEWSLETTER



UTAH VALLEY UNIVERSITY—ONE OF 100 UTAH COMPANIES CHAMPIONING WOMEN

Governor Spencer Cox recognized Utah Valley University as one of 100 Utah-based businesses championing women. UVU was the only university to receive this designation. “These individuals and businesses represent the very best Utah has to offer,” said gov. Cox in a press release. “They work tirelessly and continually to step up to meet new challenges, and the results make our state a thriving place for women to do business.”

Despite the Governor’s Office of Economic Opportunity website stating that “Utah is at the forefront of innovation and awe-inspiring economic opportunity.” Utah is consistently ranked among the worst for women’s equality, according to WalletHub. For the state to continue to see economic success we must create cultures that better support women, and Utah Valley University is leading the way in these efforts.

Rachel Lund, senior director of UVU’s Women’s Success Center, said she was not surprised by the recognition of Utah Valley University. “I think it is really well-deserved that we are among the organizations recognized as one of the 100 companies championing women because I see that not only in our policies and our hiring practices but really in the day-to-day behavior on our campus,” Lund said. Utah Valley University’s dedication to championing women includes many initiatives, programs, and events providing a path and the necessary support to ensure women achieve their full potential.

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MEET THE 2023-24 BONNIE BALLIF-SPANVILL RESEARCH FELLOWS

We are thrilled and honored to be awarded the prestigious Bonnie Ballif-Spanvill Endowed Fellowship for this academic year. Our research team is deeply committed to addressing an important research question — the gender pay gap in the financial technology (FinTech) industry. The gender pay gap refers to the wage disparity between male and female employees and managers. We believe this is a promising project for the following reasons. First, over the past decade, the financial technology (FinTech) industry has experienced remarkable growth and is challenging and disrupting traditional financial industries in terms of product innovation, customer satisfaction, and employer demand in the labor market. Through our research, we aim to delve into the extent to which FinTech innovation influences the dynamics of the labor market, especially concerning gender pay disparities. Second, this project can provide students with valuable learning experiences and practical skills. Most importantly, it can increase students' awareness of gender inequality in the workplace, particularly in the FinTech industry.

This can help students develop a better understanding of the challenges that women face in the industry and can also inspire them to become advocates for gender equity. Furthermore, the project's findings and recommendations will be disseminated to the broader community, raising awareness of the issue and encouraging dialogue and action. The involvement of female research assistants from diverse backgrounds also contributes to the project's impact by promoting gender equity and diversity in the industry. Ultimately, the community impact of this research extends beyond the industry itself. By nurturing greater gender equity and inclusivity in our society, we aspire to contribute to a more equitable and inclusive world.



DR. RACHEL BI

Dr. Rachel Bi is an Associate Professor in the Personal Financial Planning program, director of the WSB FinTech Center, and the head of the Finance and Economics Department at Utah Valley University Woodbury School of Business. She has been teaching financial planning software in the classroom for over 13 years and has been leading the Technology Applications in Personal Financial Planning course at Utah Valley University for nine years.

Working with students at the WSB FinTech Center, Dr. Bi has been exploring new business applications using cutting-edge technologies such as Artificial Intelligence (AI), Blockchain, Cloud Computing, and Machine Learning. The FinTech center has a mission to advance our education and promote student success through interdisciplinary hands-on innovative projects. In 2022, Dr. Bi led the FinTech Center students to build the UVU NFT platform. The platform opens a new channel for university fundraising and community engagements. Over the years, our FinTech center has done several AI projects in the past including:

- Software Architecture for Machine Learning in Personal Financial Planning
- Stock Market Feature Selection for Machine Learning
- AI-Driven Sentiment Analysis on Twitter
- Software Architecture Integrating Blockchain and AI for Medical Data Aggregation

DR. CHONG MENG

Dr. Chong Meng is an Assistant Professor of Finance in the Finance and Economics Department at Woodbury School of Business. Since joining UVU in the Fall of 2022, he has been passionately engaged in teaching Principles of Finance and Financial Statement Analysis, believing that his expertise in finance research can equip UVU students with valuable real-world insights.

Meng's research primarily focuses on two areas related to corporate finance. First, he aims to understand the impact of stock market imperfections on firms' financing and investment activities. Additionally, he explores the intriguing dynamics between product market competition and the stock market. His passion for data-driven insights drives his focus on empirical research with real-life implications, including the following research questions:

- Do IPO market imperfections have long-term effects on newly public firms' performance?
- Do financing shocks from FinTech startups motivate banks to actively engage in acquisitions?





DR. VIOLETA VASILEVSKA APPOINTED AS THE NEW UWHEN PRESIDENT FOR UVU CHAPTER

What is UWHEN?

UWHEN is the Utah Women in Higher Education Network. The UVU Chapter is an employee organization committed to advancing women's equity and leadership in higher education. The UVU Chapter also focuses specifically on helping employees develop leadership skills, increase participation in personal and professional development, and nurture a culture of collective empowerment.

NOTE FROM PRESIDENT VIOLETA VASILEVSKA

I started my presidency with confidence – knowing that behind me there is an absolutely wonderful group of Board members who are enthusiastic, caring, understanding and extremely committed and supportive of the work we are doing. We worked diligently this summer to put together the UWHEN fall program that will offer various professional development opportunities for employees on the theme of Nurturing Leadership & Management Skills/Strengths. In addition, we are happy and honored to announce that the UWHEN State Leadership conference will be hosted by Utah Valley University on April 5th, 2024. I truly hope that these events will empower participants to look deeper inside themselves, (re)discover and cultivate their own skills and strengths and awaken the leader in them. In addition, these opportunities will provide a plethora of space to allow participants to network, discuss and raise questions/issues they have encountered and hopefully find answers and strategies for working through them.

One of my goals this year is to extend our community so that more employees benefit from the work that this organization is doing. My Board members and I are dedicated to reaching out to female identifying employees, encouraging them in their leadership quests, listening to them and supporting them in their efforts, and helping them build better leadership and management skills. Continuing the great work that Marianna Henry (Past-President) and her Board did last year, we will continue building strong, inclusive, and diverse UWHEN network community where everyone is welcomed, heard, and cherished. I have experienced firsthand the importance of the supportive network that encourages one to develop and/or strengthen personal and professional skills and pushes one to reach their true potential, while maintaining their wellbeing. My personal hope is that everyone who gets involved in any way with UWHEN UVU Chapter this year finds such support and empowerment among this community.

UWHEN—UVU CHAPTER FALL EVENTS

SEPT. 12 ————— VIRTUAL BOOK CLUB
1:00 PM

SEPT. 13 ————— IN-PERSON BOOK CLUB
1:00 PM

SEPT. 20 ————— OPENING FALL SOCIAL
11:30AM TO 12:30 PM

OCT. 4 ————— FACULTY FORUM
12:00 TO 1:00 PM

OCT. 10 ————— VIRTUAL BOOK CLUB
1:00 PM

OCT. 11 ————— IN-PERSON BOOK CLUB
1:00 PM

OCT. 12 ————— FALL LEADERSHIP LUNCHEON
GUEST SPEAKER—PROVO MAYOR MICHELLE KAUFUSI

NOV. 14 ————— VIRTUAL BOOK CLUB
1:00 PM

NOV. 15 ————— IN-PERSON BOOK CLUB
1:00 PM

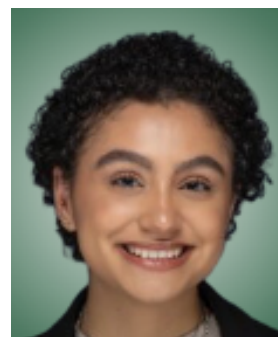
NOV. 17 ————— PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT EVENT
12:00 TO 1:00 PM

APR. 5 ————— UWHEN STATE CONFERENCE
MORE INFO. TO COME

ALL-WOMEN STUDENT RESEARCH TEAM PRESENTS IN OXFORD'S MAP THE SYSTEM COMPETITION

Breanna Lambert (top left), Priscilla Villaseñor-Navarro (top right), and Addison Hansen (bottom left) recently competed in the University of Oxford's *Map the System* research competition hosted by the Skoll Centre of Social Entrepreneurship. This research competition encourages student leaders to develop deep understanding of the unjust systems they attempt to dismantle.

The UVU student team researched *The Lack of Comprehensive Sex Education for Utah Youth*. Their research took an equity-centered system-thinking approach and highlighted some of the primary health and safety concerns prevalent throughout the state of Utah. The Saïd Business School of Oxford awarded the UVU team with the "Underrepresented Community Voices Award" for their efforts to highlight how local communities have been affected.



SEEKING WORK AND LIFE BALANCE—A HELPFUL RESOURCE

With a new semester beginning, it often becomes increasingly difficult to harmonize professional aspirations with personal responsibilities. Seeking work-life balance may be difficult but is not impossible, and referring to the following resource from The Harvard Business Review may help in the process.

- [The Harvard Business Reviews; Balancing Work and Family](#)