

Subject: News from the CIO, October 2025
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From: Dave Baird
To: Rachel Schnepfer



Wesleyan University Information Technology Services

Issue #48, October, 2025

The "Pumpkin Spiced" Edition:



Dear Colleagues:

I hope your semester is off to a smooth start. Note the plethora of pumpkins in your surroundings, a sure sign of Cyber-Security Awareness Month. We'll cover that and more in this issue, so please read on...!

In this newsletter:

- STEAM Train award for community engagement
- WesPortal and Workday
- Can I (should I?) do that with AI??
- Powerful New AI Server Expands HPC Capabilities
- October is Cyber-Security Awareness Month
- Your random seasonal lyric

Let's get to it...

STEAM Train honors Wesleyan with 2025 Community Engagement Award

[STEAM Train](#) has selected Wesleyan University as the recipient of their 2025 Community Engagement Award. The award will be presented on November 22nd at a STEAM Train awards and fundraising banquet.

The award is given to an organization that has and continues to work collaboratively with STEAM Train to address its mission of introducing multiple generations of underrepresented populations to opportunities in STEM fields.

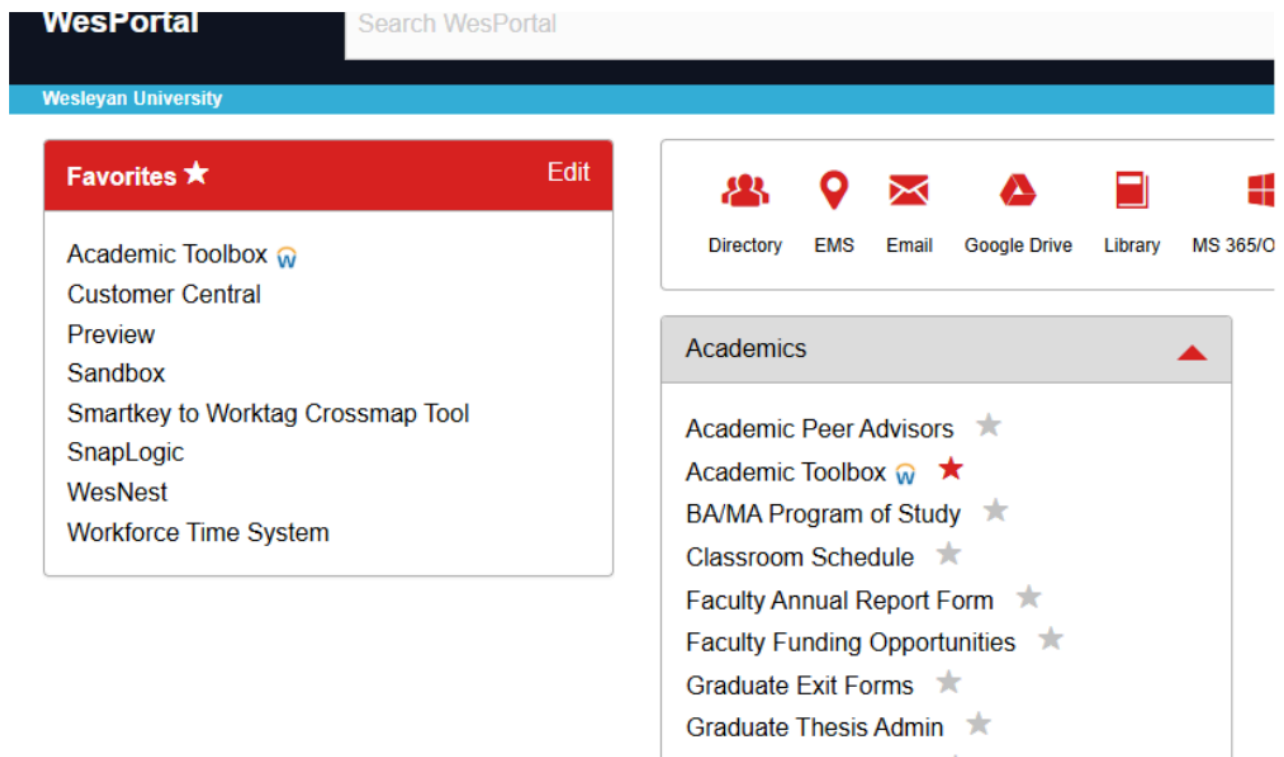
Alex O'Neil, ITS Service Desk Manager, has played a pivotal role in supporting the Fast Track Academy workforce development program by hosting apprentices to provide them with exposure to the field of Information Technology in a professional environment. Additionally, Erik Quimby has spearheaded ITS donations of both MAC and PC computers to enrich STEAM Train's students' learning experience, enabling their preparations for the demands of the modern workplace.

In the award letter, STEAM Train President and CEO Donna Hylton noted: "... Beyond technical support, Wesleyan University has amplified our visibility by featuring us on the WESU radio station, offering student interns through the

board residency class—one of whom continues to serve on our Board of Directors—and inviting us to participate in community-focused conversations and events that promote our mission. Dr. David Baird, Vice President for Information Technology and Chief Information Officer, and Dr. Clifton Watson, Director of the Jewett Center for Community Partnerships, have worked closely with STEAM Train to advance our mission. The university's ongoing commitment to our work and the broader community is truly commendable."

WesPortal and Workday

Starting in November WesPortal will begin providing feedback to the community of links and applications that will be replaced by Workday as we go-live with the Workday Student module in Spring of 2026. Links that will be replaced by Workday functionality will have a miniature Workday logo next to them to signify their replacement. We are currently in the process of evaluating and cataloging the hundreds of links within WesPortal to validate which ones will be replaced. This effort is designed to provide a mechanism to help the community understand the scope of the change and it will help you identify the most commonly used applications that are being replaced so you know what training offerings or sessions will be the most valuable to you.



Can I (should I?) do that with AI??

As AI becomes more ubiquitous in our favorite applications, promising to make our lives easier and reduce the time it takes to accomplish daily tasks, it's important to be mindful users of these applications. By no means should we not explore and use them—we're totally here for that! But we should do so responsibly. When we click "accept" on the Terms of Service, it is extremely likely that we are agreeing to allow the company to use any data we upload into their application to "improve their product." Which can mean many things, from using your data to train their AI models to selling your data to a third-party. We encourage folks to pause for a moment and reflect on their thoughts on their own data privacy. And if you are using these applications with Wesleyan data, please review the [Generative AI Usage Policy](#), and always confirm your usage does not violate the policy. As ever, we are happy to chat with you about any questions or concerns you might have. Please reach out to Rachel Schnepfer if you wish.

Powerful New AI Server Expands HPC Capabilities

Thanks to the expertise and energy of Henk Meij, Assistant Director, Unix Systems and High Performance Computing, Wesleyan continues to equip research faculty with the tools they need to push the boundaries of discovery. A powerful new AI server for Dr. Antonio Laverghetta has arrived, representing a significant expansion of Wesleyan's

High-Performance Computing (HPC) environment. Working closely with Dr. Laverghetta before his arrival, Henk helped design and acquire a system tailored to support his research at the intersection of AI, creativity, and psychometrics. Dr. Laverghetta joined Wesleyan in July coming from Penn State University.

The new server features cutting-edge GPU technology and a memory footprint larger than any existing HPC system at Wesleyan, bringing a single machine online that boosts total GPU compute capacity by roughly 16%. It will power projects such as automated creativity scorers and AI-driven educational assessments, advancing research that blends STEM, education, and cognitive science.

Interested in knowing more about Dr. Laverghetta's research? You can find him in the Quantitative Analysis Center in the Allbritton Center or reach him at alaverghetta@wesleyan.edu.

October is Cyber-Security Awareness Month

This month I encourage everyone to spend a few minutes reading up on the latest nefarious ways that hackers are attempting to steal your information both at work and at home. A good resource to start with is [CISA](#), the Cyber-Security and Infrastructure Security Agency. Another one is the [Cyber-Security Alliance](#). We will soon be launching our *annual* cyber security awareness training program. In preparation, we recently conducted a simulated phishing attack with an email that looked like it was sent from W.B. Mason. By gathering feedback from a sampling of the user community, we hope to improve the training offerings and increase our resilience to a real threat. This year, we will again be using online training to satisfy our cyber insurance requirements. Please be on the lookout for an email from "Wesleyan University <system@litmos.com>" in the coming weeks. Thanks!

Finally, as a reward for reading this far, here is your Random Seasonal Lyric...

All Hallows' Eve draws nigh... providing an opportunity to sample this classic from California super group, the Eagles. Written by Don Henley and Bernie Leadon, [Witchy Woman](#) was released on their debut album in 1972. This Wikipedia entry provides [more information](#) about the inspiration for the song. Enjoy this excerpt:

Raven hair and ruby lips, sparks fly from her fingertips

Echoed voices in the night

She's a restless spirit on an endless flight

Woo-hoo witchy woman, see how high she flies

Woo-hoo witchy woman, she got the moon in her eyes

Until next time, please be in touch if you want more information on any of the above or if you have suggestions for future topics, and thanks for reading!

Dave Baird
VP for IT & CIO

