

## **Brelsford WSU Visitor Center Tour**

KENZIE KOEHN: Good evening, everyone. My name is Kenzie Koehn, with Global Campus Connections. We are here with Amberly Boone, the Program and Marketing Coordinator of the Visitor Center. And we are going to start our look into WSU.

She's going to take us through this beautiful Brelsford WSU Visitor Center. So with that, Amberly, I'm going to turn it over with you. And we'll see you in a little bit for some question and answer. Let us know if you have any problems in the chat or have trouble hearing. Thanks so much.

AMBERLY BOONE: Perfect. Thank you, Kenzie, so much. Well, welcome everybody. This is the brand new Brelsford WSU Visitor Center, and I'm so excited that you have all tuned in to check it out with me. We're located here at the corner of Main and Spring Street in downtown Pullman.

So it is a perfect location as downtown is just headed over that way, and WSU campus is just up the road. We are kind of the bridge between the downtown Pullman community and campus. It kind of brings us all together in that town and gown. As you can see beside me here, we have these 15 foot high letters that spell out WSU.

And we're on the wrong side of them at the moment, but when you're coming down Main Street, that is so easy to see. So if you have the opportunity to visit us here in Pullman, just look for the big WSU, and you won't be able to miss us. The other cool thing is that the U actually supports the edge of the roof of the Visitor Center building. And so it is structurally an important part of the facility, but also just such an iconic piece to add to Pullman.

In December, we had all kinds of graduates come here and get their pictures taken with our giant letters. And we've actually already started seeing some of the caps and gowns coming down to take pictures for the spring. So if you're coming here for graduation, please stop by the Visitor Center. Get your picture taken. We'd be happy to take the picture for you.

So I'm going to bring us in to inside of the Visitor Center now. As you will see when we get in there, it is such an amazing facility. The architects really put a lot of thought into the way that they designed absolutely everything. You will see there is really nothing that is just functional. They included something unique about every aspect of this building.

So I'm going to start over here. And on this wall, you'll see the words to our WSU fight song. Kind of the cornerstone, of course, of being a Cougar. Below you'll see the WSU athletics hall of fame. And this doesn't include everybody, but it's definitely a good picture of some of the real highlights from WSU athletics throughout the years.

John Olerud is on here, who was a pitcher and then went on to play for Toronto. Drew Bledsoe, who was a quarterback and took the Patriots to the Super Bowl. And we actually have a little extra special thing with Drew Bledsoe that I'll talk about a little bit later in the tour. If you look over here at the other side of this wall, we have the words to "Washington, My Washington," which is the alma mater of Washington State University. Below it, we have some of our distinguished alumni.

Again, it's not everybody, but it is a really good representation of how throughout the years-- not just recently, but throughout history, WSU has had some really amazing alums attend here. Edward R. Murrow from the class of 1930. Of course, named for the Edward R. Murrow School of Communication. We also have John Fabian, class of 1962. And he was the very first Cougar astronaut.

Another very cool thing about John Fabian is that he actually grew up right here in Pullman, and actually lives in Washington state today. As we move along throughout this hallway here, from the back entrance of the Visitor Center, you'll see this wall over here is our spirit wall. We have a wonderful picture of the Washington State University Cougar Marching Band. And along the bottom is a nice compilation of a representation of all 17 sports that we have for the NCAA, and some recent highlights.

These are more recent because, of course, we had the stuff in the past earlier. And so it really shows a highlight of what's been going on recently. The cool thing about the Visitor Center, which you'll see more of later as well, is everything was designed to be changed. So as time goes on and this information gets older and we have new star athletes that we want to feature, we'll actually be changing these out. So every time you come to Pullman and every time you visit the Visitor Center, there's probably going to be something new.

We'll take you over to this side of the wall again. And this whole rest of the wall down this way is actually a timeline of the significant events in Washington State University's history. At the top, you'll actually see a very cool picture of the way campus looks today. As you scroll along to the other side, you'll see a picture of what campus looked like in 1899. Below those photos are the significant events.

And I'll just point out a few here for you since, of course, you cannot read all of them as you're walking through. Let's see here. In 1959, Washington State College becomes Washington State University. That was obviously a big milestone for us. We're actually walking backwards, so we're going to go a little bit back in time here, but that's pretty cool.

Here we have 1926. Butch Meeker, who was 5 feet 5 inches tall, was our quarterback. And that is actually where we got the name Butch for the Cougar mascot. If we go along here, 1919, the Cougar was officially adopted as the College's mascot. And it continues all the way down to when we were born, which is March 28, 1980.

And that is when we were first initiated as the state's land grant university. Over here is a more functional aspect of the Visitor Center. And this is kind of what I was talking about. We have our restrooms, and we have our drinking fountains. Of course you need those for a facility like this.

But they wanted to make sure that every space was something significant. So on the wall here, you'll see that they have dedicated this part to showing the commitment that WSU has to sustainability and the environment. The University actually reduced its total annual water consumption by 37%, which is 272 million gallons of water a year. So even little things like this, that we just need this space in our facility, they wanted you to get something out of it, and that's how we did it.

If you look over here, again, to the wall, we have Ferdinand. And if any of you tuned in to the virtual tour of Ferdinand's Creamery, you know a little bit about this. But if you didn't, we have the college creamery right here on campus. And they make the world famous Cougar Gold Cheese. Definitely a spot that you want to hit while you're here.

And we can definitely show you how to get there when you come and stop at the Visitor Center. We're going to keep going along here. And on this wall, we have a beautiful portrait of our current president, Dr. Elson S. Floyd. It is very cool that we have the opportunity to display this portrait. A lot of times these are not even done until after the president has already passed along to the next president.

But with the new visitor center, we wanted to be able to highlight who our current president is. And we actually have the opportunity to feature this portrait. Right over here, we have an informational kiosk. So when you visit us, if you needed to be checking your emails or you have information for the University that you need to look up, we have this kiosk here that you can use. This is also the backside of our information desk.

And as we continue along here, I'll introduce you to our staff so that you can be comfortable when you come in and get more information. First, though, we are going to go to our donor wall. This is a very cool aspect of the University and this was put together completely by the Washington State University Foundation. We have a video that plays and is just the looping video. And it is really highlighting the donor supported research that's happening here at the University.

And showing all the things that we wouldn't be able to do without those great supporters that we have. On the other side, we have an interactive touchscreen. And we actually have two of these here in the Visitor Center. We'll see the next one here in a little bit. This one is done by the Foundation.

And so you can see the nice background. If you touch here, there's a little information from President Floyd. Here you'll see all of the donors that have given to Washington State University and while it pulls up some bigger donors at first, any donor that has given to the University is

recognized. And that's very important for us because even a little bit of funding and support for the University definitely goes a long way.

We also have a calendar of events. This is especially useful. So when you are visiting Pullman, you can come right here to the Visitor Center, scroll through all of the calendar entries, and find out exactly what you can do while you're staying here. Another great resource, of course, is our front desk staff, who I will introduce to you next. So if we move along over here, we have our front desk.

And this, right over here, is Veechar. He is one of our student employees. And you will find students working at our desk most of the time that you're here. We love that. Especially when we have prospective students coming in with their parents, they love to be able to ask a student's opinion about the University and all the things that they love about being a Cougar and living in Pullman.

If you notice the architectural aspects of this desk, you'll see that the front here is actually finished in OSB, or what's called oriented strand board. Oriented strand board was actually helped developed right here at Washington State University. In fact, I'll be pointing out throughout the tour different pieces of wood materials. And all the wood materials that are in here were partially developed here at the University. So that's another great way that the architects really took the design of the building and incorporated Cougar spirit into it.

They didn't want to just put something up that structurally was functional, but they wanted to finish it and really make it about Cougs. Next, we're going to come on over here. And we have the front entrance to our Visitor Center. So when you walk in, this is what you will see. Right here is our display case, and this is all the merchandise that we sell.

We have a very selective selection of our merchandise. And it's all really focused on highlighting the University. So you'll see we sell the Cougar Gold Cheese and all the Cougar cheeses. We sell the WSU Department of Entomology Honey. We have some Cougar Pride Organic Pancake Mix.

The milling process for that was actually developed here at the University. We also have, if you can see in there, a wine called the Doubleback. And I told you I'd talk a little bit more about Drew Bledsoe. Doubleback is actually Drew Bledsoe's wine. And now that he's no longer playing football, he has gone back to his roots, which is what the term doubleback actually refers to.

Gone back to Walla Walla where he grew up, and has opened this vineyard, and is now producing this amazing wine. This is actually something that people come in here looking just for that. And it's a pretty fun aspect of working here at the Visitor Center with all of our brand new displays. Because not only are we giving people information, but we're really telling them about some history about Washington State University.

Right over here is actually the front door of the Visitor Center. So when you come in, that's exactly where you'll come in and be greeted right at our front desk. You'll also notice that we

have some brochures right here at the front desk. This one is the Facts and Figures from Washington State University. New students and parents love this brochure.

It tells about the makeup of how many students we have, how many graduate students we have, the cultural demographic, all that kind of stuff. So that is also a main function of our Visitor Center, is we are here to help you with information, whether it be you want to find out how to apply to be here at the University, if you're an alumni and you want to find out how to connect and get more involved with the University. If you're just touring the area and you want to know where can I eat in Pullman, or what are some of the good tourist aspects of Pullman?

We are here to help you with that. Our desk is manned 100% of the time when we are open, and we're just basically waiting for you to come in and ask us questions. The other cool thing about this venue is that we actually rent it out for special events. So during non-business hours, we have the ability for you to rent this space and have your own event. We have some graduation parties booked, we've done some birthday parties.

We actually just did a sorority dance. So we have a wide range of things that are happening here in the Visitor Center. And a big goal is for us to utilize this facility all the time. There are some really neat features of the architecture that went into this building because they had plans to make it an event space as well. And so I'll be showing you those in just a moment.

Now I would actually like to take you over to the wine display. And you'll see, again, we have the oriented strand board that is the finishing touch on our wine display. And a really big display featuring our viticulture and enology programs. Right now that is such a growing program here at the University. We have the Wine Science Center that's being built down in the Tri-Cities.

And every year here in Pullman, that is getting bigger and bigger. We actually have also developed a Wine Business emphasis in our Hospitality section, which is actually the only program of its kind in the country. I'll bring your attention to the wine specifically now. So the reason that we have wine here-- and yes, you can purchase it here at the Visitor Center. Very common question.

The reason that we have that is that we are highlighting only wines that are produced or owned by WSU alumni. So here you will see this brochure is about the Wine by Cougars club. They actually started this concept at the Alumni Association. And they created a club that you can subscribe to, and quarterly get wine sent to you, exclusively produced and owned by Cougars. Once we opened this facility, we wanted to kind of expand on that and make that available to people when they came here.

So the wide variety of wines that you see here are all wines owned and produced by Cougar alumni. We have over 100 different wines here in the Visitor Center. And the really neat thing about it is that we have some wines that you will not find in your grocery stores. We have wines that otherwise you would only be able to find at their winery. But because they're alums and

because they love WSU, they have let us purchase and distribute their wines here in the Visitor Center.

I'm also going to call your attention to some wines that are pretty special, actually. Right here is the Blended Learning Dry Riesling. And if you can see on there, it says viticulture and enology. That wine was actually developed by WSU students taking WSU classes in the viticulture and enology program. That was the first wine that they have made that they have been able to market and resell.

They came up with a second wine that is a red blend, which we carry as well. And those two by far are the biggest sellers that we have here. Cougs love Cougs, for sure. Next, we are going to move on over to some of our other displays. And I'm going to take you to our other interactive display.

Now this display will be a little bit different than the interactive display that you saw before. This one here is a 72 inch touchscreen. Usually we have rolling pictures of Washington State University to give everybody a nice, kind of well-rounded look at what the University has and what they're doing. Once I push this button here, then it pops up a menu. And what we have on this menu are promotional videos, slide shows, and photos of all of the different things that we have here at the University.

We have a video showcasing your first year at WSU. So if you're a prospective student, you can find out what it's going to be like. We have the Mathematics Learning Center, and that shows you some of the different resources that you can use to make sure that you're getting the best academic experience. We have a great video on the Wine Science Center. We have a video on the making of Cougar Gold Cheese.

The WSU Bear Facility. Here, I'm going to show you about the Brelsford family. And so the Brelsford family-- of course, it's called the Brelsford WSU Visitor Center. It was Duane and Terri Brelsford, along with their parents, that this was really named for. And the reason that we named it after the Brelsforfs is because not only were they a significant contributor to the building of this facility, but they have been supporters of both the community of Pullman and WSU for a very long time.

They live right here in Pullman. They love going to Cougar events. And they just really represented, again, that relationship between the town and the gown. Next, I'm going to show you a video of the construction of the Visitor Center.

This building went up very quickly. It started in May of 2013 and was completed in October of 2013. Very quick construction. The community members loved watching it go up. And I'm going to give you a little sneak peek of how that all went.

[MUSIC PLAYING]

AMBERLY BOONE: Welcome back. I hope you enjoyed that video. It is something that really shows how involved the Pullman community and WSU have been in building this facility. When we had our grand opening on October 12, this room was packed. And it really showed us how much people were loving this venue, how supportive they were of the facility, and really actually gave us a good look into how events were going to work here.

Speaking of that, I'm going to show you a pretty cool feature right over here that is really designed for events. This wall here, you can see, comes perpendicular to the back wall and goes straight out. On this wall we have information all about research and achievements that both WSU faculty, staff, and students have achieved while at Washington State University. We have a wall that's identical to this on the other side of the room. It also is showing that same information.

And because of the location of the walls, they actually have two sides. So we have four walls full of information dedicated to showing all of the amazing things that are happening by the people who work and study at WSU. It also is not just limited to Pullman. We have information about all of the sister campuses that are part of the University. And then we also have information about community outreach that WSU does throughout the state of Washington.

As you come over here, this is the very cool part that has to do with events. And if you see, we can unhook the wall, and move it. So this wall can move all the way over to the other side to lay flat with the wall. It can also loop back around and be flat against the other side. So when we're doing events, this is key to making sure that we can open up this space, we can move the furniture, and we can actually hold events here that are dinners for about 90 or a max capacity of 159.

So as you come to Pullman and as you're thinking about all the things that you're going to do, if you have a special event, it may be perfect for the Visitor Center. Again, right here is our community outreach side of the wall. And then we have a large campus map. We actually have three different maps here in the Visitor Center. There's maps on both of the interactive touchscreens and this large map here.

So I promise you if you come to visit Pullman, you will not get lost if you come and visit the Visitor Center first. The purpose of this map is actually to show you some of the tourist highlights here both in Pullman but all connected to the University. Right here, number one is featured down below, and it is actually grizzly bears. We have really the only research facility for adult grizzly bears in the world here at Washington State. So that's definitely one you want to see.

But if you are coming in the wintertime, they will be hibernating, so watch out for that. Some other features that we have-- Palouse Ridge Golf Club is ranked very high in golf clubs around the world. We have Ferdinand's, the CUB, Bryan Clock Tower, which I'll talk a little bit more about a little bit later. The Student Recreation Center, the Alumni Center, Conner Museum, Holland and Terrell Libraries, and the Museum of Art.

Speaking of the Museum of Art, we actually have a rotating display right now at the Visitor Center with six pieces of blown glass. It's part of the permanent display of the WSU Museum of Art. And one of them is from Chihuly. So as we walk over here, I can show you a quick glimpse of that. And then we're going to be going outside to talk a little bit more about all of the cool features of the Visitor Center.

So as we walk out here, you can see we have this really nice patio. And we've got some picnic tables so that if you're coming with your family, you need to grab some quick lunch, you can sit down and do that. Right over here, we have the light tower.

Now people see this and they always wonder what is this thing. And this is actually an artistic nod to Bryan Clock Tower, which I just mentioned before. If you haven't been to campus before or haven't seen the pictures, Bryan Clock Tower is one of the most significant monuments on campus. It is, just like it sounds, a large clock tower. And at night, it glows crimson.

Our light tower, at night, actually also glows crimson all the time, except when we're having special events, we can actually make the color anything that we want. One color I'm not sure we would ever do is purple. But other than that, we can do any color that you like. As we move along back here, I'm actually going to take you over here first. So we have another picnic table.

And you can see we have some really nice landscaping right out here. All of the landscaping is 100% native plants. The reason that we did that is to actually really reduce our water consumption. So these native plants are used to the dry summers that we have here on the Palouse, so they really don't need a lot of water during the summer. That really cuts back on the sprinklers, the sprinkler time that we have, and all that water that we'd be pushing out onto the lawn, they just are naturally used to being here.

So we don't have to water them a whole lot. Another way that we are really helping with water saving and sustainability is with our rain garden. This big tub right here is our rain garden. And actually Washington State University Extension has partnered with a nonprofit organization, and they are trying to put in 12,000 rain gardens in the Puget Sound area by 2016. Now why would they do that, you may ask.

Well, runoff from driveways and rooftops is actually the number one cause of pollution in the Puget Sound. So by routing your water down into these rain gardens, it then gets filtered out, and those pollutants and sediment actually stay here instead of going down into the groundwater. So again, like I was saying before, all of the features here, not only are they beautiful and just a really fun aesthetic thing to look at, everything has a purpose.

And Cougar pride was really put into absolutely every aspect of this facility. So now we're going to go back in and we're going to do a little bit of chatting with Kenzie. Talk about maybe some things happening here at the Visitor Center. And then after that, we are actually going to go to your questions.

We get approximately 60 to 80 visitors a day. On the weekends, if there are special events going on-- not like Mom's Weekend, but smaller special events on campus-- we can get up to 100, 120ish. We opened in October-- we actually opened on Dad's Weekend-- and so we haven't actually had a lot of opportunities to see how our numbers are on big weekends like that. We only, I think, went through one football game also. So--

KENZIE KOEHN: [INAUDIBLE].

AMBERLY BOONE: Yeah. So we're very excited, actually, for this upcoming Mom's Weekend because it's going to be really the first really big weekend since we opened. And we're really, really excited to see how many people come through.

CASSIE: [INAUDIBLE].

AMBERLY BOONE: Ooh. That's a tough question because there's definitely several go to spots. But the first place I would say is Ferdinand's. It really is a hot spot for people.

And it's so fun because you can go in there and you can see them making the Cougar Cheese through an observation window there. And it's got this really cool style too. It's kind of like this old ice cream shop style to it. And it's just really a one-of-a-kind experience that you really can't get anywhere else.

CASSIE: Our next question-- what's your personal favorite aspect [INAUDIBLE]?

AMBERLY BOONE: My personal favorite aspect. Well, to tell you just a little bit about my history, I come from event planning. And so my favorite aspect is actually the movable walls. It is such a cool feature. I've never seen that before.

You can stop those walls any place that you want. It's not just like hook in the floor one place or another, but you can stop them anywhere. And it makes it so versatile for having special events in here. Because not only are we renting out the facility but we also are doing our own promo events. And so it's just unlimited configurations and ability to be creative with that sort of thing.

CASSIE: [INAUDIBLE]. Our next question is how does our visitor center compare to other universities?

AMBERLY BOONE: How does our visitor center compare to other universities? That's a great question. It's actually a really wide range of what other universities have. I know when they were building this facility they we're looking at-- Rutgers has one that is similar to ours. Let's see.

Oregon State, I think, also has one that is similar to ours. Something that even I didn't realize until I started working here is that there's kind of a line between visitor centers that also act as welcome centers for prospective students and visitor centers that are solely dedicated to giving

people information about the University and the area and just educating them. Our Visitor Center is one that we're just giving people information, we're showing off the University, that kind of thing.

A lot of visitor centers are very geared toward student recruitment and that sort of thing, but we actually have a WSU Welcome Center, which is something totally separate. So it definitely varies. I realize I kind of got off topic there, but it definitely varies. And while some visitor centers also are just rooms in one of the administration buildings on campuses, others have big buildings dedicated to it like this one.

KENZIE KOEHN: OK. So we are wrapping up the end of our tour. We've learned some great things about the Visitor Center. If you are coming for Mom's Weekend or Commencement-- which Amberly's going to talk to us about some upcoming events here in just a minute-- definitely come check out the Visitor Center. I remember when I first came in. It was crazy.

It's so beautiful, and just an awesome environment to just walk into. So definitely come check it out. And before we go, I'm going to let her talk about a couple of things they have upcoming. Little bit more about Mom's Weekend and some of the specific things, and then Commencement coming up in May.

AMBERLY BOONE: Yeah, so we are definitely very busy here at the Visitor Center. Like you said, Mom's Weekend is coming up. And so on Thursday we actually have an event called Chocolate Decadence. It's actually a partnership event with the Pullman Chamber of Commerce. So again, that kind of town and gown emphasis there.

And 26 different businesses throughout Pullman will be giving away free chocolate that night from 4:00 to 7:00. And so you definitely get your chocolate fix. I've done it before, and it's a lot of chocolate. But we will actually be giving away pieces of some cake called Palouse Chocolate Lentil Cake. And that's done by CUB Catering here at the University.

We'll be giving away pieces of that. And then we'll actually also be doing some wine tasting from our Wine by Cougars. And we'll be having a 10% discount on that featured wine of that evening. Then on Friday, we will be open for our regular hours, 7:00 to 5:00. And in the evening, we actually have the facility rented out, and Alternative to Violence of the Palouse is doing a fundraiser event here.

And for those of you, of course, who are maybe not from Pullman, it's a nonprofit organization that helps out families and women in need when they have experienced some sort of domestic violence. And so they're going to be doing a fundraiser here. It's actually open to the public as well. So come on by and support that great cause.

On Saturday, we will be opening early-- 7:30 AM on Saturday-- and we will have some complimentary treats and complimentary coffee. We call it our open house. And so you can

come in and get that. We also will be having our own wine tasting that day from 11:00 until 4:00, and you'll get to try five different wines that we have here at the Visitor Center.

So it's really a great opportunity to test some of those out. Because we don't do tasting on a regular basis. And that's really one of the only ways is to hit our special events. On Sunday, we are going to be open from-- I believe it's 7:00 AM and then we'll be closing at 2:30. Again, complimentary coffee and snacks.

And your last chance to get your Cougar Cheese, get your honey, all the Cougar merchandise that you're looking for before you head out for the weekend. So yeah. So that's our Mom's Weekend. And then you also asked about graduation, right?

So graduation-- we're going to be doing something actually very similar with the wine tasting. We'll also have extended hours. Friday, I believe we'll be open until 6:00. And so you can come on down, get your picture with the letters. I think that there's going to be a line, so I would come down pretty early because we've already started seeing people in their caps and gowns coming down, getting their picture with those.

But it's definitely a very cool opportunity. And something that people in the past haven't had. So very unique to this generation of Cougars. We'll be doing a wine tasting again on the Saturday event. And we always, on those big events, have complimentary coffee and snacks, and just want to make you feel welcome, so.

KENZIE KOEHN: Do we have any more questions, Cassie? No? OK. Well, if you do have questions, please feel free to email us and I can get them to Amberly. And we can get those answered for you.

And definitely keep an eye out on both our website and the website for the Visitor Center for upcoming events. Football next fall. Definitely, I'm sure, there will be events centered around those games. Got big things happening in athletics. So I can imagine that the Visitor Center's excited for that.

So definitely keep those coming in and we can get those answered. Come check them out for Mom's Weekend and Commencement. I'm bringing my cap and gown to get my picture by the letters even though I graduated years and years ago. Hey, I still have it.

It's in the closet. So it's going to happen, I think. But thank you all for coming out and seeing us this evening, seeing the facility and its beauty. And we hope to see you all at our next event. Thanks so much.