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Contact: Pamela Silberman, Director of Communications

Office: 801.321.7110

Cell: 801.633.8177

Email: [psilberman@utahsbr.edu](mailto:psilberman@utahsbr.edu)

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## David L. Buhler Named as Commissioner of Higher Education

By unanimous vote, and with the approval of Governor Gary Herbert, the State Board of Regents Thursday selected David L. Buhler as Utah's eighth Commissioner of Higher Education, pending confirmation by the State Senate. Mr. Buhler, currently Associate Commissioner for Public Affairs for the Utah System of Higher Education, is expected to take office as Commissioner in August of this year, succeeding Dr. William A. Sederburg who will retire on August 1, 2012.

Associate Commissioner Buhler has had a long and distinguished career in higher education and public service. He has served as Associate Commissioner for 12 years, including as Interim Commissioner in 2008. Prior to his appointment as Associate Commissioner, Buhler served in the Utah State Senate (1995-1999). He also served on the Salt Lake City Council (2000-2007) and was a Trustee for the University of Utah (1999-2000). Mr. Buhler was an Adjunct Professor of Political Science at the University of Utah (1990-2006) and Executive Director of the Utah Department of Commerce (1989-1992). He also worked in business as a vice president of a national testing company for eight years.

During his tenure as Associate Commissioner, Buhler has developed positive and productive relationships with the Board of Regents, university and college presidents, boards of trustees, and the legislative and executive branches of government. He has provided leadership in supporting the Board of Regents' legislative agendas and working collaboratively with all of the USHE institutions. Since 2008, he has overseen the Office of Participation and Outreach, which includes administration of the College Access Challenge Grant, and the Regents' and New Century Scholarships. As Utah State Senator, Buhler was a member of Senate Leadership, and was twice elected to serve as Council Chair while on the Salt Lake City Council.

"Associate Commissioner Buhler's background in higher education, state government, and community service make him uniquely qualified to serve as the next Commissioner of Higher Education for the State of Utah," stated Board of Regents Chair, Bonnie Jean Beesley. "Dave's experience as Associate Commissioner for the past 12 years and his proven track record indicate that he is the right person to fill this position and help us meet the challenges facing higher education. We have asked Commissioner-Designate Buhler to build upon the work of the past, including advancing the Regents' strategic plan which calls for increasing the number of Utahns who have earned a post-secondary degree or certificate,

to reach our overall goal of 66 percent. We are excited about what the future holds and are pleased that Dave is willing to lend his skills to strengthening the quality and level of attainment for students engaged in higher education in the State of Utah.”

The Commissioner of Higher Education is the CEO to the State Board of Regents, which is the steward for the Utah System of Higher Education. The Commissioner is responsible for ensuring that the Board’s policies and programs are properly executed at the eight public colleges and universities in Utah. The Commissioner assists the Board in presidential searches, appointments, and evaluations. Additionally, the Commissioner makes recommendations to the Board on policy matters, provides statewide leadership, collaboration, coordination, and is a key higher education spokesperson with the State Legislature, the Congressional Delegation, the Governor, and the general public.

“Dave Buhler’s long history of public service for education in the legislature and local government, as well as his private sector experience uniquely qualify him for this position,” Governor Herbert said following separate meetings with Buhler and Utah Regent chairs. “Dave will be able to ensure our 66% by 2020 goals can be achieved, allowing our economy to continue to grow and prosper. His leadership will foster continued education excellence as Utah leads the nation in economic growth and quality of life.”

The search for a new Commissioner commenced after the announcement earlier this year by Commissioner Bill Sederburg that he would step down in August. A nationwide search has been conducted, with over 50 candidates considered. The search committee, comprised of seven Regents, after screening nine candidates over the past several months, put forward Associate Commissioner Buhler’s name for consideration by the full Board. After interviewing Buhler, the Board made its decision Thursday afternoon to name him as Utah’s eighth Commissioner of Higher Education, with the Governor’s concurrence, and pending confirmation by the Utah State Senate.

“I appreciate the trust and confidence the Board of Regents has demonstrated by this appointment, as well as the Governor’s support,” said Buhler. “I first came to work in higher education 22 years ago, as an adjunct professor at the University of Utah, and have learned firsthand the strengths and challenges facing us as we work toward the 66 percent goal. For generations one of Utah’s great strengths has been the state’s commitment to provide quality affordable higher education opportunities for its residents. These opportunities are more important now than ever before. If confirmed by the State Senate, I am anxious to work even more closely with the Regents, our presidents, the Governor, legislators, and the public to ensure opportunity, quality, and innovation in higher education in the state of Utah.”

Mr. Buhler is completing a PhD in Political Science at the University of Utah. He earned a Master’s in Public Administration from Brigham Young University and a Bachelor of Science in History and Political Science from the University of Utah.

A Salt Lake City native, Dave and his wife Lori are the parents of five children.

Previous Commissioners of Higher Education were: G. Homer Durham (1969-1976), T.H. Bell (1976-1981), Arvo Van Alstyne (1981-1985), Wm. Rolfe Kerr (1985-1993), Cecelia H. Foxley (1993-2003), Richard E. Kendell (2003-2007), and William A. Sederburg (2008-2012).

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