

# HIGHER ED MATTERS

Utah System of Higher Education, January 2012

## 2012 Session: Public Investment in Higher Ed is Essential

In the state of Utah, more students are being educated with less money. Current state tax funds per student have dropped by \$1,555 since 2008. When tuition is added, funds per student are \$721 less.

For this year's Legislative session, higher education officials are aware that money is still tight and they appreciate that budget cuts have not been proposed. Higher ed officials have also recommended key priorities for lawmakers this year.

**The top priority for the 2012 Legislative Session is employee compensation.** Higher Education is a people-intensive enterprise, and Utah's colleges and universities compete in a national—sometimes international—market for talent, with differential pay based on market.

The Regents propose merit-based compensation adjustments based on the same level funded for K-12 public education and state employees (for example, the state tax share of a 1% increase equals \$6.7 million.) To help presidents retain their best and brightest, who despite tough economic times around the country are still being recruited elsewhere, the Regents propose \$5 million to be used for retention of key faculty and staff.

**Another key priority this year is Mission Based Performance Funding.** In 2011, the Legislature enacted SB 97, sponsored by Senator Steve Urquhart, to change the way new funding is allocated to Utah higher education institutions. As adopted by the Legislature, Mission Based Performance Funding includes four components:

1. *Enrollment Growth.* \$10 million is proposed which covers the state share of 60% of the most recent year's growth. This enables institutions to hire more faculty, including adjuncts to offer classes needed by students. Without these resources, several institutions are turning students away—delaying time to graduation.

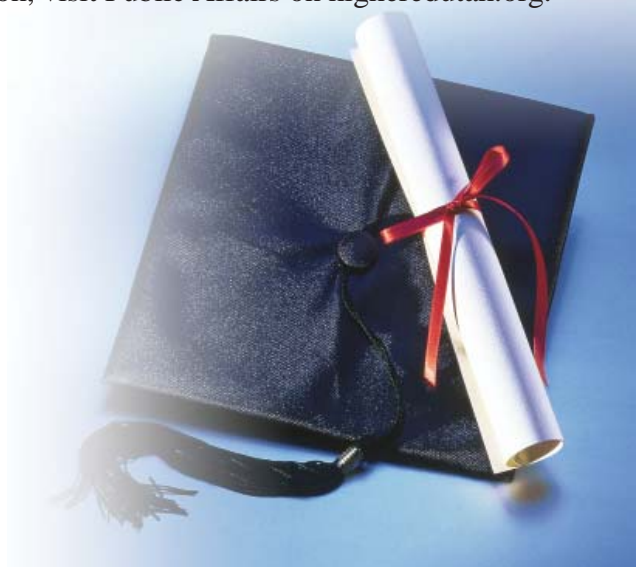
2. *Distinctive Mission Priorities.* Presidents have proposed specific initiatives, with accountability benchmarks, based on their distinctive missions and linked to

statewide goals of participation, completion and economic development. Under provisions of the bill, each requires accountability back to the Legislature. \$10 million is requested to fund these important initiatives.

3. *Equity.* The Legislature required, in a Senate amendment, that the Regents include as part of their budget request a proposal to address funding inequities. Based on a several month study and recommendations by the National Center for Higher Education Management Systems, \$8 million is requested to begin addressing these issues, also based upon institutional missions.

4. *Historic Unfunded Enrollment Growth.* The Legislature required in a House amendment, that the Regents also include in their request funding for historic enrollment growth that has gone unfunded during the past decade. \$5,955,000 is requested, equal to about 10% of the total amount.

**This year, the Regents' budget request also includes proposals in alignment with the Governor's Commission on Excellence and Efficiency in Education** including expanding Technology Intensive Concurrent Enrollment, efficiency initiatives, funding of Success Stipends to assist students in college success, increased funding of Career and Technical Education, and funding growth of the Regents' Scholarship, among other things. For the total budget request, as well as higher education-specific information during the Legislative Session, visit Public Affairs on [higher.utah.gov](http://higher.utah.gov).



## Utah System of Higher Education: Supporting Utah's colleges and universities



WSU President Ann Millner speaks with Regent Nolan Karras at a 2011 State Board of Regents meeting held in Salt Lake City.



The Utah System of Higher Education, along with the State Board of Regents, continually engage in efforts to cohesively improve and support all of Utah's public colleges and universities. Here are a few examples of system wide efforts:

*Academic Innovation.* Utah is a national leader when it comes to seamless transfer of credits among institutions. Additionally, USHE has spearheaded the development of new Technology-intensive Concurrent Enrollment courses which, starting in 2012, will be readily available to Utah high school juniors and seniors and will speed the time to degree completion.

*Accountability.* A major responsibility of USHE is to assure accountability and transparency of higher ed data by standardizing data collected from institutions. Additionally, Board of Regents meetings are streamed online and data is updated annually and posted on [higheredutah.org](http://higheredutah.org) to ensure transparency.

*Efficiency.* USHE is one of the most efficient systems in the country in generating numbers of degrees for dollars spent. In fact, Utah's institutions receive about 74% of the public funding that peer institutions receive.



State Board of Regents Chair David Jordan swears in Orem's James Evans as a new Regent, representing UCAT, in January 2011.

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