

# HIGHER ED MATTERS

Utah System of Higher Education, August 2013

## College Completion is a Top Priority

Institutions Highlight Efforts Already Underway to Raise Graduation Rates

At their July meeting, the State Board of Regents approved an ambitious new college completion initiative aimed at increasing the rate at which students graduate from Utah's public colleges and universities. At the meeting, Presidents Bioteau, Wight, and Albrecht highlighted the ongoing efforts their institutions are making to encourage and increase college completion. Presidents at the other five USHE institutions are undertaking similar efforts.



### Salt Lake Community College GenEd Step Ahead Program

This program focuses on student completion by providing a structured program schedule and student engagement with their peers and faculty. The 470 students currently participating in the program are engaged through the following strategies:

- Minimum of three classes per semester, including one college success class
- Online learning commons through the learning management system and collaborative work
- Enhanced advising and tutoring services

SLCC and its students are already seeing positive outcomes from this program, including:

- Increased student retention
- Increased credit load
- Shortened time to completion
- Increased student-student and student-faculty interaction
- Improved academic success



### Weber State University TERM Project

#### Technology Enhanced Redesign of Mathematics

Weber State University has implemented the TERM Project to help students more successfully complete de-

velopmental math requirements and move into college-level math courses. TERM requires students spend time in the lab practicing homework problems and uses software that provides immediate feedback to the student on their errors. Other features of TERM include:

- On-site instructors who provide individual attention to students
- "All you can learn" format allows students to complete multiple courses in one semester

Weber State requires those students who need developmental math classes to enroll during their first two semesters. Students are also required to demonstrate progress or they will receive a registration hold for non-developmental courses. As a result, WSU has seen a 71% increase in developmental math completions since 2008. Looking ahead, WSU plans to widen the gateway for placement into higher level courses and incorporate "flipped" classroom approaches.



### Utah State University Pathways to Success

Utah State University is focusing on pathways that start with better high school preparation and support students throughout their college careers in order to increase successful outcomes for USU students. Components of the pathway include:

- Admission criteria that emphasize better preparation in high school for college coursework
- Math diagnostic tests for all entering students
- Foundation courses to be completed within first 15 hours of coursework
- Proactive advising to reduce hours to degree completion
- Pathway to major so students better understand completion requirements and career opportunities

## Higher Education Facts

With students returning to class this month at all of Utah's colleges and universities, here is a refresher on some facts about Utah's public system of higher education.

### Public Colleges & Universities Educate Most of Utah's College Students

- eight public colleges & universities
- 179,871 students enrolled 2012-13 (80% of all college students in Utah)
- 31,339 credentials awarded in spring 2012 (75% of all credentials)
- enrollment projected to increase by 28% in next 10 years

### Utah Colleges are Among Most Affordable

- third lowest in total cost to attend college
- lowest level of student debt (55% graduate without debt)
- of those who borrow, average student debt (\$17,227) is lower than national average (\$26,600)
- lowest student loan default rate in US (2.3%)

### Higher Ed Degree Holders Contribute More to Society (vs. High School Diploma)

- earn 52% more annually
- contribute three times more in state taxes
- half as likely to be unemployed
- less likely to be incarcerated or receive public assistance
- live healthier and happier lives

### Higher Education Contributes to Utah's Economy

- \$4.2 billion enterprise
- employs over 30,000 people (includes U of U Healthcare)
- 2/3 of state building inventory
- for every \$1 of state tax funds spent on capital development, higher education generates \$2.60 in non-state funds
- Utah Educational Savings Plan one of only four 529 plans to receive Morningstar Gold Rating (uesp.org)

### Higher Education in Utah is Efficient

- second in nation for fewest state dollars spent per degree
- total funding per student has decreased by \$600 since 2008 (tax funds & tuition)

### Higher Education Leverages Technology

- one in five students enroll in an online course
- 49 degrees available entirely online (including 12 master's degrees)
- over 1,400 courses available online
- 2/3 of all student participate in technology-delivered instruction

### Focus on College Preparation, Participation, & Completion

- Utah Scholars Initiative encourages students to take rigorous courses in high school in order to be "college & career ready"
- number of students receiving Regents' Scholarship has increased 35% annually since 2008
- New Century Scholarship recognizes students who complete associate degree while in high school
- Completion Initiative encourages students to:
  - enroll in 15 credits each semester
  - complete General Education requirements early in college career
  - obtain associate degree along the way to bachelor's degree

### Higher Education is Facing Challenges

- college enrollment is not keeping pace with population growth
- state funds have decreased from 67% per student to 49% since 2008
- Utah ranks 47th in state funding for need-based financial aid
- student use of Pell Grants has increased by 92% since 2008, compared to 54% nationally
- additional state support is critical to reach 66% goal