

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Contact: Pamela Silberman, Director of Communications
Office: 801.321.7110
Cell: 801.633.8177
Email: psilberman@ushe.edu

October 22, 2013

Utah's Colleges & Universities Launch "15 to Finish" Campaign *Initiative Encourages Students to Save Money by Completing College on Time*

SALT LAKE CITY – Timed to roll out with spring semester registration at Utah's eight public colleges and universities, the Utah System of Higher Education is launching its "15 to Finish" college completion campaign today. The campaign touts the benefits of enrolling in 15 credits a semester, which is the minimum number needed to complete an associate degree in two years or a bachelor's degree in four years. The central message of 15 to Finish is that "time is the enemy" when it comes to college completion. The data show that full-time students are more likely to complete college on time and earn better grades than their peers who take fewer credits. The majority of college students in Utah already take between 12 and 14 credits, so by adding one more class, they can save a whole semester of tuition. In addition, at most USHE institutions students can take 15 credits for the same price as 12.

"15 to Finish is the centerpiece of a larger college completion initiative that has been approved by the State Board of Regents and supported by all eight institutional presidents," said David Buhler, Commissioner of Higher Education. "We know that students who enroll in at least 15 credits finish college faster and can start on a career that provides financial independence and increased lifetime earnings."

Beginning this week on video screens across Utah's college and university campuses, students will see the 15 to Finish video, which sends the message in less than 30 seconds that they can save time, save money, and graduate faster. Other elements of the campaign include ads in student newspapers, web and social media, and peer-to-peer promotion by student groups. The goal is to redefine full-time as 15 credits for those students who are able to take a full course load. The campaign will continue through summer orientation for incoming freshmen and is being incorporated into messaging for high school students as they prepare for the college application process. In fact, in 2013 the Utah Legislature modified the requirements for the state's two merit scholarships, the Regents' Scholarship and the New Century Scholarship, to require that recipients enroll in and successfully complete 15 credits each semester in order to remain eligible. The website 15tofinishutah.com reinforces the message and contains links to the video and other college completion resources.

“The semester I enrolled in 18 credits was my best ever, academically and personally,” said Erik Mikkelson, student representative to the Board of Regents and 2013 graduate of Utah State University. “I would encourage students to take at least 15 credits in order to get the most out of their college experience,” Mikkelson added.

The initiative, modeled after similar successful campaigns in other states, is part of a nationwide effort promoted by Complete College America, an organization whose mission is to increase the number of Americans with career certificates or college degrees.

About The Utah System of Higher Education: USHE includes all of Utah’s eight public colleges and universities: The University of Utah, Utah State University, Weber State University, Southern Utah University, Snow College, Dixie State University, Utah Valley University and Salt Lake Community College. For more information on the Utah System of Higher Education, visit our website at higheredutah.org.

###