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College Application Week Launches in Utah High Schools

Pilot Project Seeks to Get More Students Applying to College Earlier in their Senior Year

SALT LAKE CITY – The Utah System of Higher Education (USHE) believes that every Utah high school senior should apply to college. In order to come closer to realizing this goal, USHE has partnered with three school districts to launch a pilot Utah College Application Week at eight high schools along the Wasatch Front. The initiative particularly focuses on first-generation and low-income students, who are less likely to apply to and enroll in college. The goal of Utah College Application Week is to provide every high school senior at partner schools the opportunity to complete at least one college or university application.

“There is nothing more important students can do for their futures than graduate from high school and go on to graduate from college,” says Melissa Miller Kincart, Assistant Commissioner for Outreach and Access. “We want all students in Utah to know they are college material and offer them the support and information they need to get through the college application process.”

When surveyed, more than 90 percent of middle school students say they plan to go to college, yet only 54 percent of Utah’s high school graduates enroll in postsecondary education immediately after they graduate. That rate drops to 41 percent for low-income students. Because a postsecondary degree or certificate is the best way to increase economic opportunity in today’s economy, educational achievement is particularly important for these students.

“Our schools are thrilled to be part of this effort,” says Judy Petersen, Director of College and Career Readiness for Granite School District, which has three of its high schools participating. “The teachers and administrators in these schools are creating a college-going culture to help students realize that attending college is the next step after high school.”

All of the participating schools are promoting Utah College Application Week in advance to students and their families, so they come to school that week prepared to apply. The high schools have reserved their computer labs and engaged volunteers to help walk students through their applications. Higher education and public education have also come together to provide fee waivers and donations to pay the applications fees for low-income students, so those fees are not a barrier to applying.

When done, students who complete an application will receive an “I applied!” sticker and Twitter updates throughout the week will use the hashtag, #iapplied.

The Utah College Application Week pilot project is part of the American College Application Campaign, a national initiative of the American Council on Education. This is the first year the campaign is taking place in Utah, with the goal of expanding it to more schools across the state in future years. More information is available at stepuputah.com/college-application-week or at the [American College Application Campaign website](#).

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

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