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Contact           Melanie Heath, Director of Communications  
Office             801.321.7110  
Cell                801.244.9620  
Email             mheath@ushe.edu

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**Utah System of Higher Education Receives Funding to Accelerate Strategic Student Success Planning Project**

*Grant Funds Collaboration with Other State Systems to Address At-risk Student Populations*

SALT LAKE CITY – The Utah System of Higher Education (USHE) has been selected by the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation to join a nationwide group of 12 higher education systems exploring higher education transformation at a large scale and solving common issues encountered during implementation.

David Buhler, Commissioner of Higher Education, stated: “This grant proves that Utah is innovative on a number of fronts as we seek to increase college preparation, participation and completion. Partnering with other state higher education systems will allow us to brainstorm new strategies and identify best practices on a nationwide scale, further ensuring that public higher education in Utah is accessible, affordable and high-quality.”

In the grant proposal, key issues were identified that will significantly impact the “66by2020” goal and could be chosen as an area of focus for the grant work. Among the ideas presented were:

1. Implement predictive analytics system-wide to improve student access at time of admission as well as retention through virtual advising.
2. Redefine, simplify and individualize math requirements system-wide to more effectively meet students’ quantitative literacy needs.
3. Address the 27 percent of Utahns with “some college, no degree.”

“We are eager to learn from our peer systems as we discuss transformational practices,” said Melissa Miller Kincart, Assistant Commissioner of Outreach and Access at USHE. “We look forward to participating in this collaborative effort that will advance our efforts to improve student access and success both statewide and at institutional levels.”

Over the next year the Commissioner’s office grant leadership team will work with a consultant to develop the project plan. During this time, USHE will be the recipient of \$200,035 from the

Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation to offset time and resources spent on project alignment, stakeholder engagement and implementation planning.

The Utah System of Higher Education 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 [higheredutah.org](http://higheredutah.org).

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