

Utah System of Higher Education
2018 Annual Report



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A College Education is More Important Than Ever Before

Ninety-five percent of new jobs created since the Great Recession require a college education¹, yet only half of Utah's population has a college degree or high-quality certificate.² Utahns must understand how crucial postsecondary education is for their future as well as its importance for the future of our state as a whole.

Challenges in College Attainment

Though earning a college education is increasingly important, only 47 percent of Utah high school students enroll in college right after high school,³ one of the lowest rates in the nation. While a contributing factor is delayed entry into higher education due to religious service, other factors such as income, a diversifying population, and geography play a significant role in whether students choose college and remain in college until they complete a certificate or degree. Utah has a large number of students who need remediation and also consistently ranks near the top of states with a high percentage of adults with some college but no degree.⁴

The Board of Regents is focused on increasing the educational attainment of Utahns to enhance their overall quality of life and to meet Utah's current and future workforce needs.

Laying the Groundwork: Board Working Groups

The Board of Regents established strategic objectives in 2015, with subsequent updates in 2016 and 2017. The Board revised its objectives in 2018 to better cover the full scope of its roles and responsibilities. The revised objectives are:

- Affordable Access
- Timely Completion
- Workforce and Research
- Capacity and Growth

Following that, the Board of Regents worked to identify potential areas of state-level effort to improve Utah's college attainment and completion rates.

In early 2018 the Board divided into working groups, each focused on a strategic objective. These working groups collected insights and feedback from a variety of stakeholders: legislators, institutional administrators, state agency heads, business leaders, and elected officials. The Board also conducted a broad-based stakeholder qualitative study, a public opinion poll, and a survey of the state-level higher education landscape across the country.

Honing in on Emerging Themes

The Board's substantial work in 2018 has been a turning point, leading to a sharpened approach in addressing Utah's most pressing issues in higher education today. As a result of this significant effort, the Board has refined its priorities into several emerging themes:



Affordability: Maintaining Low Tuition, Examining Costs, and Adjusting Policy

Utah has some of the most cost-efficient public colleges and universities in the country.⁵ Public higher education in Utah has benefitted from strong support of elected and business leaders. As a result, Utah continues to lead the country in both the low percentage of students who take on debt and the low dollar amount of student debt. While 46 percent to 74 percent of students accrue debt in all other states, only 38 percent of Utah students take on any debt for college.⁶ Low debt is most likely due to Utah's low tuition rates. Utah's four-year tuition rates are the fourth lowest in the country.⁷

Despite low rates of tuition and general fees, paying for college continues to be a primary concern for Utahns. The cost and complexity of paying for college is the top issue for Utah parents, with only half feeling confident in finding information on scholarships, grants, and financial aid.⁸

As the Board considers an affordability strategy, it will be important to recognize that although tuition at Utah's four-year public institutions is the fourth lowest in the nation, Utah community colleges rank 18th lowest in the nation,⁹ which creates questions about college affordability for students pursuing career and technical training, an associate's degree, or a cost-effective alternative to complete their first two years of school before transferring to a four-year institution.

Further, legislative audit findings¹⁰ highlighted what the Board has already recognized: the need to examine tuition—including its policies, tuition-setting processes, how tuition relates to the total cost of higher education, and non-tuition costs borne by students such as course fees.

2018 Board Action: Tuition Policy Changes and Study

The Board of Regents adopted policy changes that modify the way tuition will be adjusted at the public colleges and universities in Utah.¹¹ The Board will no longer adopt systemwide, uniform tuition increases. It is moving to a process that allows for institution-specific tuition rates. This new practice will be in effect when the Board considers tuition adjustments for the 2019-20 academic year.

In early 2018, the Board took initial steps to better understand how institutions are using tuition waivers—a state-sanctioned mechanism for student scholarships and aid. In its review, the Board recognized an urgent need to assess how tuition waivers impact economic return to the state, the student, and the institution, and also how waivers affect the relationship between tuition and student aid policies. In November 2018, the Board approved the final scope of work for a tuition and student aid policy review to be conducted by the Kem C. Gardner Institute.¹² Upon completion of the study, the Board will receive:

1. A baseline assessment of USHE tuition and student aid policies across the system and how USHE compares with other selected higher education systems in the country;
2. A framework to assess the economic impact of non-resident students who come to Utah for educational purposes and those who remain in Utah after graduation; and
3. Recommendations for policy and performance metrics on affordability.



Access: College Opportunity for a Diversifying Population

Too many Utah high school students are not going on to college.¹³ Though college admission is open to all high school graduates in Utah—the majority of the public colleges and universities in the state are open-access—many high school students don't think college is possible for them. And even if they do, more and more Utahns have no idea where to even start. These problems are especially true for those with significant barriers to college entry, such as students who are low-income and first-generation.

Ninety percent of Utah parents expect their children to attend college, yet only about two-thirds of all Utah's high school graduates enroll in college within five years.¹⁴ This suggests that despite wanting their children to attend college, parents may lack tools and information that would help them ensure it happens.

As college student enrollment grows alongside overall population growth in Utah, that growth is also rapidly diversifying the state's demographics. Utah expects to see 25 percent minority share by 2030, with Latinos as the fastest-growing minority.¹⁵ College enrollment rates among Latino high school graduates lag the overall population by about twenty-five percent¹⁶ (an issue further compounded by the high school graduation gaps by ethnicity).

Family income also contributes to lower college-going rates in Utah. Thirty-seven percent of Utah public school children participate in the free and reduced lunch program.¹⁷ Students receiving free and reduced lunch who graduate high school are 20 percent less likely to enroll in college.¹⁸

Such disparities persist all the way to college completion. Only half of Latino students persist and complete college after eight years, while three-quarters of white students finish.¹⁹ Some of the most urban areas of the state and some rural areas are seeing downward-shifting trends in college enrollment.

2018 Board Action: Statewide College Access Advising Program

To address many of these issues, in 2018, the Board experimented with a new outreach effort called the StepUp Schools Initiative, which identified 33 high schools and junior highs with high numbers of students traditionally underserved by higher education. Through StepUp Schools, Commissioner's office staff work closely with school counselors to invite students to participate in college readiness programs like StepUp Utah Scholars, the Regents' Scholarship recommended high school curriculum, and concurrent enrollment courses.

To better support Utah high school students on their path to college, the Board will scale those outreach efforts by introducing a statewide program that will put a permanent, full-time, near-peer college access advisor in every high school in Utah. This would be the first statewide college access advising program of its kind in the nation.

College access advisors help high school students:

- Register for and complete college entrance exams
- Apply for college
- Apply for scholarships, grants, and financial aid
- Prepare students for the transition to higher education

College access advisors will be available to every high school student, but will intentionally focus on supporting low-income and first-generation students.

This statewide program is an expansion of the Utah College Advising Corps, a University of Utah program that, for over 11 years, has successfully helped students navigate the process of getting into college. This program has been in 12 Utah high schools since 2007 and has demonstrated effectiveness in improving college enrollment and college graduation rates.

- After just three to five meetings with an advisor, a student's likelihood of enrolling in college nearly doubles.
- For each meeting with an advisor, a student is 5 percent more likely to graduate from college.

The Commissioner's Office has reprioritized \$1 million of existing funds to expand this program to a total of 33 high schools for the 2019-20 school year. The Board is requesting an additional \$5.9 million to fully expand the Corps statewide by 2021. This is the Board's top budget priority for the 2019 Legislative Session.



Transfer and Data: Helping Students on the Road to Completion

Utah's general education courses are highly coordinated and intended to seamlessly transfer among institutions in the Utah System of Higher Education (USHE). Such transferability presumably contributes to the high rate of student transfer between USHE institutions.

However, Utah is often among the top states with a high population of those with some college but no degree.²⁰ Ensuring students can easily re-enter higher education or transfer to a different institution is important in decreasing the percentage of those with some college but no degree and increasing completion rates.

General Education Quantitative Literacy Transfer Pathways

Recently, as part of the board-driven math pathways redesign, programs have been reexamining the Quantitative Literacy/mathematics requirements of disciplinary pathways. Each institution has designed "meta-majors" as a useful advising tool to help students identify first their area of focus and then their major earlier.

Competency-Based Pathways

Utah college students are also among some of the most connected via the web for their coursework. Forty-five percent of all public college students are enrolled in one or more of the 2,000+ courses available online. While USHE institutions offer 112 degrees and certificates entirely online, the most common use of online courses is to augment traditional college schedules.²¹ Online courses have been one way to relieve the persistent burden of continued enrollment growth at Utah colleges. This year, two institutions, Salt Lake Community College and Utah State University began efforts to expand online pathways to include competency-based general education options that will allow students to work at an individualized pace as they prove their competency in the subject matter. Those two institutions will be creating an AAS (SLCC) and an AS (USU) competency-based pathway that will be available to all USHE institutions. SLCC received legislative funding for the AAS course development; USU received some funds from the Commissioner's office.

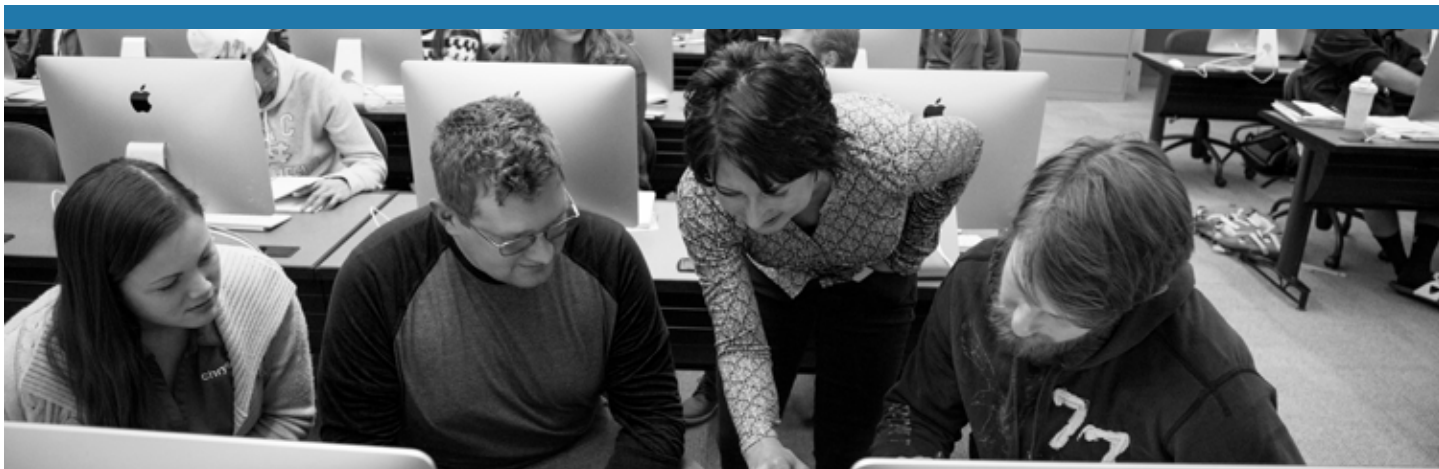
2018 Board Action: Creating a Bachelor's of Applied Science and High Impact Teaching Practices

In September 2018, the Board of Regents approved a new policy creating a Bachelor's of Applied Science (BAS) degree.²² As a bachelor's degree built upon "stackable credentials" (such as certificates and associate degrees), it is meant to create additional opportunities for students to seek bachelor's degrees that align to growing labor market needs. While the degree maintains the same general education standards required for Bachelor of Arts and Bachelor of Science degrees, it has two distinguishing characteristics:

1. Flexible preparation in the first two years of the degree based on learning developed through a variety of programs, higher education institutions, or applied learning contexts; and
2. program requirements that allow for integration of applied learning from industry or organizations.

In addition, the Board of Regents has created a mandate to ensure all USHE students have access to courses and co-curricular experiences designated as High Impact Teaching Practices, and that in 2018 institutions would find ways for all students to have access to at least one of these experiences during their first 30 credits and one during their major.²³

The Commissioner's Office is also working to identify challenges in transfer and program articulation among USHE institutions. A large component of these challenges is aligning student records in a single system in order to analyze transfer patterns and barriers.



Student Safety: Ensuring Student Mental Health and Campus Safety

The Board has worked to establish best practices, laid-out recommendations, and adopted policies regarding student safety—including mental health and sexual violence. The Board continues to seek and support ways to best address these sensitive and critically important safety issues.

2018 Board Action: Prioritize Student Safety and Wellness

USHE worked with the Utah Coalition Against Sexual Assault (UCASA) to combine the annual Title IX Conference with UCASA's annual Sexual Violence Conference in April 2018. This conference provided training to institutions' Title IX coordinators and other student services staff members.

In June 2018, a focus group of the Counseling Center Directors was held to gain the directors' insights into implementing the Regents' Mental Health Recommendations approved in September 2017. Edits to some of the strategies were suggested to:

1. Make implementation possible, and
2. Provide sufficient data to the Regents on the effectiveness of the strategies in responding to student mental health needs.

The Board will review these revisions for approval in January 2019 with the institutions completing the first systemwide survey of mental health in spring 2019.



Other Notable Highlights from 2018

Space Utilization

The Board adopted a space utilization policy to provide a systemwide standard for the effective utilization of classrooms and teaching laboratories as well as centralized scheduling and an annual reporting requirement.²⁴ Together, they will encourage institutions to optimize their space and more efficiently allocate institutional resources in assigning and utilizing available space.

Talent Development Initiative

During the 2018 Legislative Session, the Legislature passed S.B. 104, which creates a program to provide an incentive loan to a student who intends to work in a qualifying job that is considered high wage and high growth to help bolster Utah's talent pipeline where acute shortages exist. The Board of Regents enacted an administrative rule that establishes the loan application process, qualifying criteria for an individual to receive an incentive loan, the appropriations allocation process, and how to otherwise administer the program.

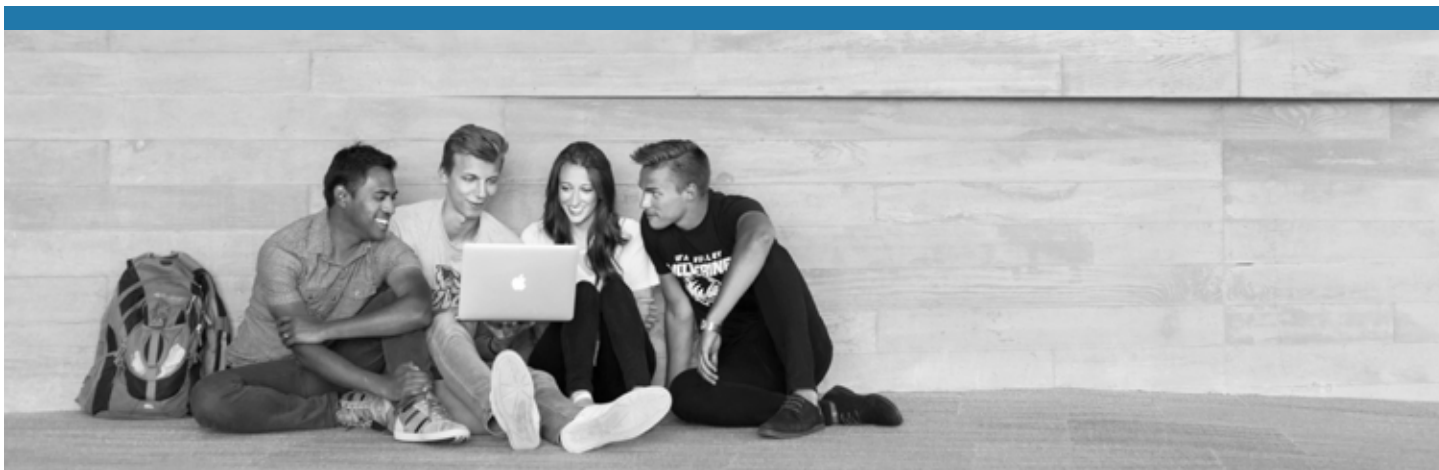
Concurrent Enrollment

Students who earn college credit in high school are more likely to complete college. Utah benefits from one of the most expansive concurrent enrollment programs in the country in which one in three high school juniors and seniors enroll in at least one college course. The number of students participating in concurrent enrollment increased by 10.6 percent, from 32,849 in the 2016-17 school year to 36,335 in 2017-18.

Utah high school students earned 268,357 credits in the 2017-18 school year, which is 34,731 more credits—and nearly 15 percent—than the previous year. By earning these college credits through concurrent enrollment, students saved \$48.7 million in future tuition expenses.²⁵

Presidential Searches

In 2018, the Board of Regents completed three successful presidential searches, appointing new presidents for the University of Utah, Utah Valley University, and Weber State University.



System Metrics

As part of the Board's ongoing strategic planning efforts, the Board adopted seven system performance metrics and initial goals aligned with the strategic objectives.²⁶ The Board then directed the Commissioner to work with the institutions to delineate the expected contributions of each institution toward these goals and identify any additional system metrics for Board consideration in early 2019.

The Board will next adopt accompanying institutional goals that will help achieve the system goals. The institutions will present their goals to the Board for approval in January 2019.

General Attainment

The total number of degrees and certificates awarded between 2011-2020

System Goal

25 percent increase (cumulative total amount of 336,950) in USHE certificates and degrees awarded from 2011 to 2020

Current Baseline

267,457 cumulative awards between 2011 and 2018 (79 percent of total goal)

Access

Five-year college participation rate of high school graduates

System Goal

75 percent of the Utah high school graduating class of 2020 will enroll within five years of graduation

Baseline

2007-2012 graduating cohort participation rate after five years: 69.4 percent

Affordability

Average published tuition and fees rates by institution type (Research, Regional, and Community College) as a share of the state's median household income

System Goal

- Research (UU, USU) not to exceed 15 percent of state's median household income
- Regional (WSU, SUU, DSU, UVU) not to exceed 10 percent of state's median household income
- Community College (SLCC, SNOW, USU-Eastern) not to exceed 7 percent of the state's median household income

Timely Completion

Percentage of students receiving an award within eight years as reported by the Integrated Postsecondary Education Data System (IPEDS) Outcomes Measure Survey

System Goal

45 percent by 2025

Current Baseline

41 percent in 2017

Workforce and Research

Annual number of degrees and certificates awarded in DWS 5-star jobs and key programs as defined in the USHE Performance Funding Model Market Demand Metric for Research and Regional Institutions only

System Goal

Increase the annual number of degrees and certificates awarded in DWS and 5-star jobs and other critical market demand programs identified by GOED and DWS to 10,000 by 2025.

Current Baseline (2017)

9,799 awards granted

Effective Use of Resources

Five-year rolling average change in total cost per award compared to change in the five-year rolling average of the Higher Education Price Index (HEPI)

System Goal

USHE's five-year rolling average change in total cost per award granted is no more than 95 percent of the five-year rolling average change in the HEPI.

Current Baseline (2017)

- 2017 USHE five-year rolling average change in total cost per award: 1.7 percent
- 2017 HEPI five-year rolling average: 2.45 percent
- 95 percent of 2017 HEPI five-year rolling average 2.33 percent

Effective Use of Resources

Instruction-related classroom space utilization

System Goal

Average minimum instruction-related classroom utilization system score of 22.5 by 2025

Current Baseline (2017)

2017 USHE Average Classroom Utilization Score: 19.4



Looking Ahead: Celebrating 50 Years of Statewide Governance

The Board is working with the Kem C. Gardner Policy Institute to understand the demographic makeup of Utah in order to set a postsecondary attainment goal for the state, consistent with projected demographic changes. A report is expected to go before the Board in Spring 2019. This report is a critical foundation to establishing a new long-term vision and strategic plan for higher education in Utah. The previous attainment goal was established in 2012, yet the higher education landscape has evolved significantly since then:

- Utah's higher education institutions are pursuing new innovations in services to students including competency-based approaches, awarding credit for prior learning, and establishing newfound articulations with outside partners. Institutions are also taking significant first steps to better applying opportunities big data and artificial intelligence to better serve students.
- Workforce uncertainty and stymied wage growth have created an environment wherein more students not only work while in college, but also leave and come back to college throughout their careers.
- Major pressures exist in relation to the overall cost of higher education.

Such factors make it critically important for the Board of Regents to use its emerging themes to build a cohesive vision for the future of higher education in Utah.

The Board is celebrating its 50th anniversary in 2019. It is fitting that the Board's efforts of 2018 have set the stage for upcoming vision-setting efforts in 2019. These efforts will establish the long-term direction for postsecondary education in Utah, given the changing demographic, economic, and workforce needs of the state.

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Board of Regents

The Utah State Board of Regents is the governing body for the Utah System of Higher Education (USHE). The Utah Legislature grants it the power to control, manage, and supervise USHE. The Board's major responsibilities include selecting and evaluating institutional presidents, setting policy, reviewing programs and degrees, approving institutional missions, and submitting a unified higher education budget request to the Governor and State Legislature. The Board of Regents is comprised of 17 Utah citizens, all appointed by the Governor.

Commissioner of Higher Education

The Commissioner of Higher Education is the chief executive officer of USHE and is appointed by the Board of Regents. The Commissioner provides statewide leadership, makes policy recommendations to the Board of Regents, and executes Board of Regents policies and programs.

Utah System of Higher Education

The Utah System of Higher Education is comprised of the eight public colleges and universities in the state:

Research universities:

University of Utah (flagship, medical school, dental school, pharmacy school, law school, etc.)
Utah State University (land grant; 33 regional campuses statewide)

Regional universities:

Weber State University
Southern Utah University
Dixie State University
Utah Valley University

Community colleges:

Salt Lake Community College
Snow College

