

May 7, 2014

MEMORANDUM

TO: State Board of Regents

FROM: David L. Buhler

SUBJECT: StepUP Ready Grants

Background

The Board of Regents was designated in 2010 by Governor Herbert, as the state agency to apply for and receive the College Access Challenge Grant Program (CACG) from the U.S. Department of Education. The CACG is a formula grant with the purpose of helping low-income students and families learn about, prepare for, and finance postsecondary education. One of Utah's three core objectives of the CACG has been to expand and enhance the statewide infrastructure in Utah, which will foster partnerships among federal, state, and local agencies, community-based organizations, businesses and public and higher education to significantly increase the number of low-income and underrepresented students who are prepared to enter and be successful in postsecondary education.

To this end, in 2011 the Office of the Commissioner, Outreach and Access department created the ImPACT: *Improving Preparation, Access, & Communities Together* Subgrant opportunity to encourage not-for-profit colleges and universities to partner, establish, strengthen, or expand access and outreach programs geared towards supporting the 66 percent goal. Since 2010, USHE has awarded almost \$2.3 million in CACG subgrants to advance this work at the institutional level.

The CACG federal money is set to sunset in FY15. With this in mind, the legislature appropriated one million in ongoing funds during the 2014 session to the Office of the Commissioner to sustain a number of college readiness initiatives created under the CACG. Additionally, the Outreach and Access Department plan to build upon administrative infrastructure of the ImPACT subgrants and initiate a new grant program, called the StepUP Ready to deepen K-16 collaboration.

Issue

Starting in June 2014, USHE will make \$600,000 available to school districts/LEAs that partner with Utah not-for-profit higher education institutions to increase the number of Utah's public high school students who graduate from high school college-ready and enroll in a post-secondary institution.

Using objectives that have been shown to increase college readiness and success, school districts/LEAs and higher education institutions can submit 1-year grant proposals with outcomes related to college readiness. All grants require a robust partnership between the LEAs and the not-for-profit higher education providers to ensure more robust and intentional efforts surrounding college preparation, enrollment and first year transition.

These grants will be on an 18-month timeline, with the Request for Proposals available in June 2014, and implementation beginning in January 2015. Additionally, in order to measure success and to identify "Projects of Promise," all grantees are required to provide baseline data and enter into a data sharing agreement with USHE so that outcomes might be determined through aggregate data available through the Utah Data Alliance. Attached is a draft one page summary with objectives and sample interventions. The remainder of the money (\$400,000) will be used to sustain the college ready activities currently in place in the Department of Outreach and Access. Specifically, the state appropriation will support:

- Utah Scholars Initiative
 - Currently active in 14 school districts
 - Slated to reach more than 29,000 students in 2013-2014
 - Students, parents, and counselors receive monthly newsletters
 - New targeted intervention with 10th grade students
- College Application Week
 - Pilot with eight schools in 2013
 - More than 2300 seniors submitted more than 1500 college applications
 - Ramping up implementation by invitation in 2014, to include more than 30 schools state-wide
 - Participating students will also register for their FAFSA PIN, which will expedite the financial aid process
- Annual USHE Counselor Conference
 - Provides updated information on college admissions and college readiness to counselors from all around the state
 - More than 500 counselors attend each year
 - Held at Thanksgiving Point
 - 2014 will add an intentional track for junior high counselors to help them implement college readiness in grades 6-8

We are very grateful for the new state appropriation to sustain and expand the work that began under the CACG. We know that K-16 solutions and strong partnerships between public and higher education supported by our new StepUp Ready grants are critical to supporting Utah's 66% by 2020 goal.

Commissioner's Recommendation

The Commissioner recommends that the Board approve the use of \$600,000 for StepUp Ready Grants as described in this memorandum and the attachment.

David L. Buhler
Commissioner of Higher Education

DLB/MMK
Attachment

2014-2015 StepUP READY Grant Overview

The most effective college readiness efforts come as a result of strong partnerships between higher education and public education. Collaboration between K-12 and higher education institutions continually demonstrate positive outcomes. In supporting Utah's 66% by 2020 goal, the Utah System of Higher Education will make monies available to school districts/LEAs that partner with a Utah not-for-profit higher education institution, to increase the number of Utah's public high school students who graduate college-ready and enroll in a post-secondary institution. Using objectives that have been shown to increase college readiness and success, school districts/LEAs and higher education institutions can submit 1-year grant proposals.

- \$600,000 total monies available*
- Grants may be up to \$50,000
- All grantees agree to enter into a data-sharing agreement with USHE
- Grants require a 50% match (cash or in-kind)
- Proposal review to be completed by a committee appointed by the Commissioner of Higher Education
- K-16 Alliances are eligible to apply
- Renewal invitations may be extended based on performance outcomes

*For the inaugural year, 2014, additional grant monies up to \$25,000 will be available through the College Access Challenge Grant (CACG). These additional funds will be available to LEAs and USHE institutions whose programs focus on underserved students. This may include first-generation, low-income, and minority students, as well as women/minorities in STEM.

Grant Timeline

RFP Available: June 2014 Application Due: September 2014 Grant Monies Released: January 2015
Implementation: January-December 2015 Data Analysis and Final Report: April 2016

Data Sharing

Grantees agree to enter into a data sharing agreement with USHE, with the understanding that results and outcomes will be compared to similar groups and control groups, using Utah Data Alliance (UDA) data. Only aggregate data will be released: no identifiable student data will be released. Districts agree to participate in USHE High School Feedback reports, which will show Districts and individual schools how many of their graduating seniors enroll within USHE, where they attend, their first-year performance, need for remediation, and other outcome data.

Grantees data may be used for additional UDA/USHE research projects, identification of "Projects of Promise," and dissemination of best practices.

Sample Objectives and Goals

College readiness is not a single event, and must occur at various points along the age/grade continuum. As such we have grouped strategies into four categories** of college readiness preparation, enrollment, transition, and professional development. Applicants will choose from the list of numbered objectives below, but the specific interventions and outcomes listed here are examples only.

1. Increase number of students who achieve ACT college-readiness benchmarks through targeted interventions and support.

****Preparation**

Higher Education Institution Role	LEA/District Role	Outcome
Provide tutoring, mentoring, and other support for students needing remediation in math and English through use of staff and service learning students. Provide opportunity for students to take residual ACT to demonstrate intervention improvement.	All students who do not meet Math benchmark of 22 will be enrolled in a supplemental math course or a math tutoring lab.	By end of senior year, 90% of seniors will have met ACT math benchmark.

2. Increase number of students completing concurrent English 1010 with a grade of "B" or higher **Preparation

Higher Education Institution Role	LEA/District Role	Outcome
Expanding CE offerings, ensuring/improving quality of CE courses, could include release time for CE director, travel funding for increased site visits, or for revisions of CE curriculum. Provide professional development for CE school-based instructors; provide tutoring for students enrolled in CE courses.	Identify middle-performing students to expand access to CE ENGL 1010, using teacher recommendations as a consideration for placement.	50% more middle-performing students successfully enroll in and complete CE ENGL 1010 with a college grade of "B" or higher.

3. Partner and expand the number of support services for low-income and under-represented students **Preparation

Higher Education Institution Role	LEA/District Role	Outcome
Provide students and/or staff tutors to teach ACT prep courses for low-income and under-represented 2 nd semester 10 th graders and 1 st semester 11 th graders.	Host ACT prep courses, recruit students, ensure student attendance at ACT prep course; plan and/or host recognition event at conclusion of course.	Increase average baseline ACT scores of low-income and under-represented student population by 7 points.

4. Increase number of students taking STEM-related courses in senior year **Preparation

Higher Education Institution Role	LEA/District Role	Outcome
Provide information regarding the importance of STEM courses in the senior year, especially math. Provide tutoring/support for students taking challenging STEM courses.	Add additional sections in math and science. Increase student knowledge of and interest in STEM through engaged learning opportunities (e.g., why a future art major might want to learn physics).	75% of senior class successfully completes STEM course.

5. Deepen elementary students' understanding of college opportunities ** Preparation

Higher Education Institution Role	LEA/District Role	Outcome
Create family campus visitation events with engaged learning opportunities across disciplines related to elementary school's learning objectives.	Work in concert with institution to create visitation event; create and distribute invitation to event; provide and/or organize transportation as needed; plan follow-up lesson plan for students and/or parents.	100% of all 5th graders complete at least one campus visitation program.

6. Increase parental engagement related to college attainment and preparation ** Preparation and Enrollment

Higher Education Institution Role	LEA/District Role	Outcome
Help create agenda and content for college preparation. Attend focus groups. Plan event for parent focus groups to visit campus in a dedicated program.	Host focus groups to devise a plan to engage parents in college preparation at every school level (elementary, junior high, high school).	Communication and outreach reaches 90% of families the subsequent year.

7. Increase number of first-generation high school seniors who apply to more than one college/university **Enrollment

Higher Education Institution Role	LEA/District Role	Outcome
Provide support staff and volunteers to assist students applying to college throughout Utah College Application Week.	Schools work in partnership with USHE and participate in Utah College Application Week.	75% of first-generation college students submit more than 1 college application during UCAW.

8. Increase the percentage of high school seniors who complete the FAFSA **Enrollment and Professional Development

Higher Education Institution Role	LEA/District Role	Outcome
Publicize, and provide volunteer support from financial aid and admissions advisors for HS FAFSA completion events. Distribute materials on the importance of FAFSA completion to the prospective students.	Enter into data-sharing agreement with UHEAA and host FAFSA Boot Campus Trainings for staff and three FAFSA completion events.	An additional 25% of senior class completes FAFSA by March 1 priority deadline.

9. Decrease summer "melt" (number of students who fail to enroll in college after being admitted) **Transition

Higher Education Institution Role	LEA/District Role	Outcome
Create the timeline and messages regarding necessary steps to complete enrollment process throughout the summer. Provide advisors or student peer leaders to take the student "hand off" in August.	Determine list of students; use grant monies to pay teachers or counselors to act as advisors in June and July; hand off to institution-based advisors in August.	90% of students who are admitted to college/university enroll in the fall semester.

10. Professional development on college readiness **Professional Development

Higher Education Institution Role	LEA/District Role	Outcome
UU or USU to provide SREB/USHE's counselor training course as professional development for existing counselors and teachers. Ensure that enough facilitators are available to meet personnel needs.	Provide an opportunity and pay associated costs for existing school counselors/teachers, to take a 3-credit college readiness course (CCTI) through working with UU or USU. .	All counselors and 25% of secondary teachers and administrators have received CCTI training.