

May 7, 2014

MEMORANDUM

TO: State Board of Regents  
FROM: David L. Buhler  
SUBJECT: StepUP College Open Houses

Background

One of Utah's three core objectives of its College Access Challenge Grant Program (CACG) is:

1. To provide information to students and families on postsecondary education: benefits, opportunities, planning, financing options (including activities associated with financial literacy), FAFSA completion, and outreach activities for students who may be at risk of not enrolling in or completing college.

To this end, the Outreach and Access Department in the Office of the Commissioner, in partnership with the Utah Council (members of the Admissions and Recruitment staffs of the not-for-profit Utah colleges and universities) implemented and coordinated the StepUp to Higher Education Regional College Open Houses geared towards supporting the 66 percent goal and Utah's CACG objectives *to significantly increase the number of low-income and underrepresented students who are prepared to enter and succeed in postsecondary education.*

Issue

This is the fourth year of this type of programming, and the second year for the Office of the Commissioner to provide sole leadership. The purpose of these events was to target 9-11th graders and provide timely information on preparing for and paying for college, while offering participants an opportunity to visit a college campus. These events were held March 19-27 at four of our USHE institutions, and all eight USHE institutions and the three private not-for-profit institutions were represented with a booth. The evening began with a StepUp to Higher Education presentation which discussed the benefits of obtaining a college degree followed by a Paying for College presentation. Each presentation was given twice throughout the evening to allow attendees an opportunity to engage with institutional representatives and hear the messaging from USHE and UHEAA. Additionally, each host institution's financial aid office had a booth, and the Utah Education Savings Plan and UHEAA were also represented.

In comparison to last year's attendance the numbers shrunk considerably, by over 60 percent. We only had 371 total participants this year, in comparison to 930 in 2013. In 2013 we mailed out over 100,000

printed postcards directly to families in targeted districts as result of Utah Futures account list, which was effective but costly. Given direct mail costs and changes in Utah Futures governance structure which meant we did not have access to student addresses, we marketed the events in the following ways.

### **Printed 40,000 Postcards**

- Per our request Ogden and Granite District mailed these via USPS to their student's homes.
- We reached out to 13 other districts and high schools in the host institutions region and they agreed to pass the post cards out to the students at school.
- Posters were sent to targeted schools to hang in halls, front office, and counseling center.
- Postcards distributed to TRiO and GEAR UP programs around the state to distribute to their program participants.
- 3,000 postcards were distributed via conference bags at three regional Latino's in Action conferences.
- Postcards distributed via UHEAA's FAFSA Completion Nights to attendees.
- Distributed through Regents' Scholarship team members high school transcript meetings.
- Sent to host institutions for distribution within their networks.

### **Email Invitation**

- Sent to all 2013 participants from 2013 events who were in grades 10-11 (500+).
- Sent to 450+ counselor participants of the 2013 USHE Counselor Conference.
- Sent to USOE counselor listserv.
- Sent to CACG Subgrantees to share with student participants.
- Sent to all Utah Council members, UHEAA, UESP, and USHE employees (350+ people).
- Mentioned in Utah Scholars Initiative newsletter with attachment and registration link (10,000+ high school students) as well as a targeted email reminder the day prior to each event to students in nearby districts.

### **Media**

- USHE press release was sent to all local media channels. And KSL did a feature story on the SLCC event.
- Event information sent directly to communications directors at key districts and USOE to distribute via Twitter/Facebook/etc.
- Information distributed through USHE, UHEAA, Utah Scholars and StepUp social media networks.

Each student participant received a follow-up email directing them to grade checklists on the StepUp website. Additionally, each participating institution received the names and contact information of each participant so that they could be added to their inquiry database and followed up on appropriately based on grade level and interests.

We received only 68 evaluations or an 18.3% response rate of our 371 total attendees. The evaluation was given to each attendee in hard copy at the events and those who completed the survey were entered into a prize drawing for college and university giveaways provided by each of the institutions. Of the respondents:

- 82% of the student participants are in grades 9 or below.
- 23% noted by coming to this event, it was their first time on a college campus.
- 97% believed participation in the event improved their understanding on how to prepare for college.

### Considerations

Despite low participant numbers it is important to note a number of key objectives were met; we reached younger students and their parents, provided them an opportunity to visit a college campus for the first time, and improved their understanding of how to prepare for college. Each student we met with were so appreciative for this opportunity to meet with all the colleges and universities under one roof and could not believe more of their friends, neighbors and classmates had not taken advantage of this opportunity.

At this point we are undecided about the future of this college awareness activity. These events are grant funded, K-12 directory address data is not easily obtained, and over the years coordination with the colleges and universities is increasingly becoming more difficult, as it is ever apparent they wish to focus on recruitment activities. Therefore, we think we may have most impact with limited resources through our large scale StepUp awareness activities, and through the expansion of Utah Scholars, College Application Week and FAFSA completion events.

### Commissioner's Recommendation

This is an information item only, no formal action by the Board is required. However, the Board is encouraged to read and take note of the information in this memorandum. Note that further follow-up will be handled by the Commissioner's Office as part of the Board's Participation strategic objective.

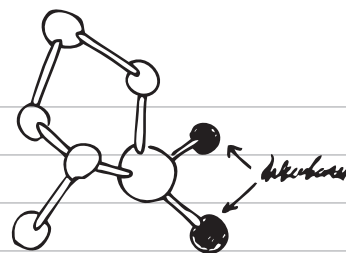
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David L. Buhler  
Commissioner of Higher Education

DLB/MMK  
Attachment



NOTES:



STEPPING **UP**  
TO **COLLEGE**

Thank you for attending our event; learn how you and your family can Step UP to Higher Education. Representatives are here to answer all your question about applying to and paying for college, as well as give information about Utah's higher education choices. On the next page you will find some helpful questions to use as conversation starters when visiting with college representatives.

#### TONIGHT'S PROGRAM

5:45 pm ..... Registration and Check-In begins

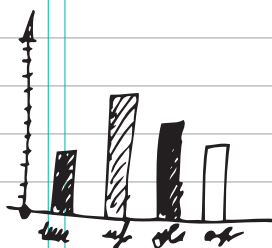
6:00 – 8:00 pm ..... College representatives available

6:00 – 6:15 pm ..... Welcome, StepUp Presentation

6:30 – 6:50 pm ..... Paying for College Presentation

7:10 – 7:25 pm ..... StepUp Presentation

7:40 – 7:55 pm ..... Paying for College Presentation



For tips on  
preparing for,  
paying for, and  
applying to college,  
visit our website!

**STEPUP**Utah.com

#### SCHOOL CONTACT INFORMATION

**Brigham Young University**  
801-422-5000  
[www.b4byu.edu](http://www.b4byu.edu)

**Dixie State University**  
435-652-7590  
[www.dixie.edu](http://www.dixie.edu)

**LDS Business College**  
801-524-8145  
[www.ldsbc.edu](http://www.ldsbc.edu)

**Salt Lake Community College**  
801-957-4111  
[www.slcc.edu](http://www.slcc.edu)

**Snow College**  
800-848-3399  
[www.snow.edu](http://www.snow.edu)

**Southern Utah University**  
435-586-7700  
[www.suu.edu](http://www.suu.edu)

**University of Utah**  
801-581-7200  
[www.utah.edu](http://www.utah.edu)

**Utah College of Applied Technology**  
801-955-2170  
[www.ucat.edu](http://www.ucat.edu)

**Utah State University**  
800-488-8108  
[www.usu.edu](http://www.usu.edu)

**Utah State University Eastern**  
800-366-2381  
[www.eastern.usu.edu](http://www.eastern.usu.edu)

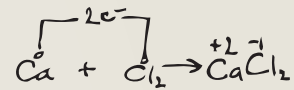
**Utah Valley University**  
801-863-8811  
[www.uvu.edu](http://www.uvu.edu)

**Weber State University**  
801-626-6050  
[www.getintoweber.edu](http://www.getintoweber.edu)

**Westminster College**  
800-748-4753  
[www.westminstercollege.edu](http://www.westminstercollege.edu)



## PREPARING FOR COLLEGE



- What courses do I need to take in high school to be ready to attend your school?
- Which elective courses do you recommend?
- What activities can I do at home and over the summer to get ready for college?
- What are your admission requirements? Do you have a minimum GPA or ACT score requirement?
- What is your application process? What is the deadline?
- How much is the application fee? Do you offer fee waivers?
- Do you have any college openhouses or overnight campus visit programs scheduled?
- What options do you have to visit campus? How can I sign up for a tour?

## PAYING FOR COLLEGE

- How much is full-time tuition per year or semester? What is the average total cost of attendance for one year including tuition, fees, books and supplies, room and board, and other personal expenses?
- What financial aid options are available? What need-based and merit-based aid do you offer?
- How do I apply for institution financial aid? What are the deadlines?
- Do you require a completed FAFSA to qualify for institution-based financial aid or scholarships?
- What scholarship opportunities are available? Do you have a scholarship resource center?
- How do I apply for scholarships? When are the deadlines?
- What types of part-time campus jobs are available? How and when do I apply?

## ABOUT THE COLLEGE or UNIVERSITY

- What type of college or university is your school? 2-year or 4-year?
- What degrees do you offer? (Certificates, associate, bachelor's, master's, JD, PhD)
- Do you have any information to help me start exploring careers?
- Which majors are available? (Ask about any majors you're considering.)
- Are there specific requirements for being admitted into particular majors?
- How many students attend your campus? Do you have multiple campuses?
- Do you have on-campus housing? What is the cost? Availability?
- What is the makeup of your student body? (Male-to-female ratio, diversity, etc.)
- What is your professor to student ratio? What is the average class size?

Paid for by a grant from the U.S. Department of Education. However, the contents do not necessarily represent the policy of the Department of Education, and you should not assume endorsement by the Federal Government.



NOTES:

