

May 6, 2015

MEMORANDUM

TO: State Board of Regents

FROM: David L. Buhler

SUBJECT: Institutional Completion Update: Salt Lake Community College

Background

In July 2013, the Board of Regents unanimously passed a resolution to “Implement Strategies to Increase Completion Rates in Support of the 66% Goal.” This resolution acknowledged that the Utah State Board of Regents is committed to improving the completion rates of students who enroll in an institution within the Utah System of Higher Education by ensuring a quality, cost-effective educational experience and awarding meaningful education credentials that will help students find gainful employment and life-long success. The Presidents and their administrations and faculty have taken seriously the Board’s charge and have been implementing these strategies.

In 2014, the Utah System of Higher Education provided *USHE Completion Grants* to support and scale projects that the institutions had developed to help them meet the implicit goals in the 2013 Board of Regents’ Completion Resolution.

In January 2015, institutions reported their three- and five-year goals regarding college completion overall and the specific initiatives in the Resolution to the Board of Regents.

Briefly, the five specific recommendations in the resolution are:

1. *Establish 15 credits hours per semester as the normal full-time course load for students.*
2. *Set plateau tuition levels with a focus on 12 to 15 credit hours to help students maximize their tuition dollars and their time.*
3. *Create semester-by-semester degree program maps with specific recommended courses each semester and make them available to current and potential students.*
4. *Encourage students to enroll in an appropriate mathematics course in their first year of college. Explore the feasibility of implementing reverse transfer/stackable credentials.*

### Issue

As a follow-up to these efforts, the members of the Academic and Student Affairs Committee requested at their January 2015 meeting that institutions report in more depth on their practices and policies that are having the most impact regarding college completion.

Institutions have been asked to highlight two areas:

- one of the five strategies outlined in the resolution for which they have gained momentum, and
- one institution-led area for which they are demonstrating impact in retention or completion.

The host institution, Salt Lake Community College, will present the May 2015 report.

### Next Steps

Over the next six months, all institutions will have a chance to report on their successful strategies to the Committee.

### Commissioner's Recommendation

This is an information item only; no formal action by the Board is required. However, the Board is encouraged to congratulate the institutions on the progress they are making toward meeting their institutional completion goals.

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David L. Buhler  
Commissioner of Higher Education

DLB/CF  
Attachments

# Open Educational Resources Initiatives

A viable path to lowering the cost of education and improving quality



## What is OER?

OER are teaching, learning, and research resources that reside in the public domain or have been released under an intellectual property license that permits their free use and repurposing by others.<sup>1</sup>

## Why OER?

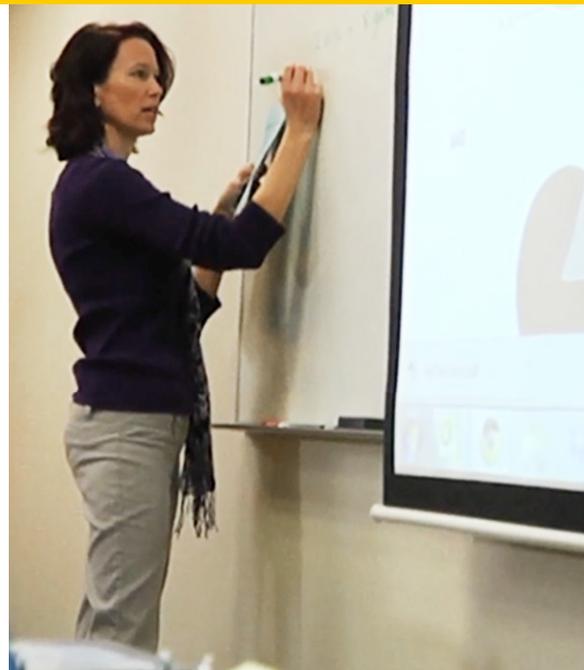
Students spent an average of \$1270 on books and supplies last year.<sup>2</sup> Over half of SLCC students don't purchase the required textbook in a course. Almost 3/4 of students cite cost as the primary reason.<sup>3</sup>

## Open SLCC

OER pilots are underway or forthcoming in Math, Political Science, History, Sociology, Geoscience, Biology, Economics, and Education. The Math department is moving from individual pilots to a department-wide commitment to OER. The History department's commitment to introduce an open textbook in History 1700 is a bold attempt to scale OER across all sections of a high-enrollment gateway course.

### Externally Funded OER Projects at SLCC

- Project Kaleidoscope: A grant funded OER pilot funded by Cerritos Foundation
- Next Generation Courseware Challenge: SLCC is a sub-awardee on two Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation grants involving open content and openly licensed courseware.



Fiscal Year 2014/15

## Savings to Students

# \$321,000

With only limited adoption, the College has served students approximately \$321,000 in textbook costs.

**BILL & MELINDA**  
**GATES foundation**

# Completion Initiatives

Supporting students through common obstacles to graduation



Salt Lake Community College (SLCC) is actively working to eliminate obstacles to graduation. This handout lists a sampling of initiatives and efforts aimed at three different obstacles: (1) K-12 alignment and college readiness, (2) pathway advising and course availability, (3) system alignment and flexibility, and (4) innovation and affordability. SLCC recognizes the urgency to better assist students to complete college-level credentials to support Utah's economy and community development across the state.

## K-12 Alignment and College Readiness

### High School Feedback Reports

SLCC personnel meet regularly with K-12 principals and provide data and feedback on the performance of their students at SLCC (sample report attached).

### Bridge to Success Program

The College also recently scaled a bridge (transition to college) program specifically for first-generation and underrepresented students. The program has grown from 15 students to nearly 200. Program participants are given certain incentives for participating including tuition waivers for fall and spring semesters, priority registration for classes, on-campus job opportunities, and textbook coupons.

### Student Intake Business Process Review

The College is comprehensively evaluating its admissions, advising, and orientation process to identify both excellent and problematic practices that contribute to student momentum and loss.

### Math Pathways and Incentives

The College has a comprehensive approach to redesigning developmental math education. The goal is no longer to support students to pass developmental math, but rather to provide a comprehensive pathway through the quantitative literacy requirement for graduation. Efforts include providing priority registration for those taking math sequentially, partial tuition discounts for completing math early, a refinement of placement test scores to place students in the highest level of math possible with corequisite support (in the form of tutors, supplemental instruction, etc.).

## Pathway Advising and Course Availability

### Pathway Advising

Through mission-based funding, SLCC secured funding for eleven new advisors to provide targeted and intrusive advising at critical points along the student pathway.

### Gateway Course Availability

Critical gateway courses are maintained between an 80% to 90% fill rate. This provides enough flexibility for students to find courses they need when they need them. Weekly reports monitor scheduling patterns and inform scheduling decisions. Gen Ed classes are scheduled evenings, weekdays, and summers and are available online.

### Program Graduation Maps

SLCC is creating semester-by-semester program graduation maps. The graduation maps will serve as a self-advising tool showing recommended course loads that range between 9-18 credit hours per semester. Degreeworks, a degree audit system, will allow students and advisors to plan and track student progress toward completion.

### Stackable Credentials

SLCC instituted a stackable credential program development model in 2011/12. At SLCC, all certificates can be stacked toward associate degrees either as satisfying core degree requirements, elective degree requirements, or through awarding credit for noncredit coursework. All AA/AS/APE degrees also "stack" with four-year degrees at USHE institutions. Students are taking advantage of the stackable credential model; the number of certificates awarded increased 70% from 2012/13 to 2013/14.

## System Alignment and Student Flexibility

### Transfer Incentives

The College is in conversations with the University of Utah regarding developing incentives for students to complete an associate degree prior to transfer. This may include incentives like discounted tuition or priority registration.

### University Partnerships

The College has partnered with UofU, USU, UVU, and WSU to provide opportunities for students to complete bachelors degrees in high-demand areas while remaining on one of SLCC's campuses (served 481 students in 2014).

### System General Education Pathways

The College has launched a General Education Certificate of Completion that fulfills all general education requirements. The certificate is fully transferable to any USHE institution.

## Innovations for Affordability

### Competency-based Education

SLCC is leveraging a \$2.5 million DOL grant to roll out a competency-based education delivery model that recognizes prior learning through a self-paced method of competency demonstrations. This initiative will be piloted within the School of Applied Technology and will target working adults who are underserved by traditional models. Successful pieces will be scaled to the larger SLCC community.

### Open Educational Resources (OER)

Students have saved approximately \$321,000 in textbook costs through OER pilots in math, political science, history, sociology, geoscience, biology, economics, and education.

# Competency-Based Education (CBE) Initiative

## CBE Benefits for the Student

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### Reduce Time to Completion

Students who enter the program with extra motivation, affinity to learn the material, or previous knowledge in the subject can accelerate through the program faster.

### Reduce Cost of Attendance

Students who are able to accelerate through the program will pay less in tuition. The fewer calendar days a student takes to complete the program requirements the lower the tuition charged.

### Recognition of Prior Learning

This delivery model recognizes and rewards all students for the knowledge they bring into their program of study. Learning is measured based on demonstration of competency and not time (credits or clock hours). If a student has previous knowledge of a competency they can demonstrate that by accelerating through the assessment, or they may take additional time working up to an assessment if the competency is new to them.

### Self-Paced, Self-Directed Learning

Using technology-enhanced educational resources, students will participate in an environment that allows them to capitalize on their motivation or other factors that influence their pace of academic achievement. Through this technology enhanced approach, adult students will also realize the ability to customize their approach to learning.

### Flexibility in Delivery

The design of the CBE model will provide program entry dates on every Monday for incoming students. It will also be based on a hybrid, or blended, delivery system that uses both online and face-to-face instruction, which allows students to access content and learn in a way that accommodates their schedule.

### Industry Designed Transcripts

CBE transcripts will list the competencies mastered and not course names. This is designed to demonstrate to potential employers “what you can do” not overarching concepts seen in a typical course title.

## CBE Challenges for Implementation

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- Financial Aid regulations (Department of Education-Experimental Sites Initiative)
- Traditional academic model does not accommodate a non-term, non-time based model
- Software and data systems compatibility
- Internal and external perception of value and credibility