

September 9, 2015

MEMORANDUM

TO: State Board of Regents

FROM: David L. Buhler

SUBJECT: Institutional Completion Update: Utah State University

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.

USHE Completion Grants were provided by the Utah System of Higher Education in 2014 to support and scale projects the institutions 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.

Brief descriptions of the five specific recommendations in the resolution are:

1. *Establish 15 credit 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.*
5. *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, Utah State University, will present the September 2015 report, which will focus on Initiative 4 related to math and stackable credentials highlighted in Initiative 5.

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 review the attached material and to congratulate the institutions on the progress they are making toward meeting their institutional completion goals.

David L. Buhler
Commissioner of Higher Education

DLB/CF