

November 4, 2015

MEMORANDUM

TO: State Board of Regents
FROM: David L. Buhler
SUBJECT: 2015-2016 USHE Research Universities Graduate Program Support

Background

Research I Graduate Program Support funding assists the University of Utah and Utah State University's specific mission for doctoral and professional level programs. These advanced levels of education and training are critical to maintain the quality of instruction, build Utah's economy through advanced skills that attract higher wages, and promote innovation among Utah's workforce. Of the \$10M requested during the 2015 legislative session \$4M was appropriated. In keeping with the same 60/40 ratio, the University of Utah received \$2.4M and Utah State University received \$1.6M. Each campus has now submitted revised detailed initiative descriptions, assessment, and budgetary plan for implementation during fiscal year 2015-16.

Issue

Request to revise Research Universities Graduate Program Support Initiatives from \$10M to \$4M.

Commissioner's Recommendation

The Commissioner recommends that the Regents approve the revised 2015-2016 Research Universities Graduate Program Support initiatives.

David L. Buhler
Commissioner of Higher Education

DLB/GLS/BLS
Attachment

UTAH SYSTEM OF HIGHER EDUCATION 2015-2016 OPERATING BUDGET REQUEST

Research Universities Graduate Program Support Original \$10,000,000 Revised: \$4,000,000

By statute, Utah has two research universities: the University of Utah, which is the flagship institution of the USHE, and Utah State University, the state's land-grant institution. By mission each has a responsibility for graduate programs including at the doctoral and professional level. These advanced levels of education and training are critical to maintain the quality of instruction at the USHE institutions, build Utah's economy through advanced skills that attract higher wages, and promote innovation among Utah's workforce.

UNIVERSITY OF UTAH

Original: \$6,000,000 Revised: \$2,400,000

Research Excellence

- Original: \$3,000,000 Revised \$1,400,000
- Reduced salaries, wages, & benefits by \$1,600,000

Graduate Program Expansion and Support

- Original: \$1,000,000 Revised \$800,000
- Reduced salaries, wages, & benefits by \$200,000

Professional Graduate Program Support

- Original: \$1,000,000 Revised \$200,000
- Reduced salaries, wages, & benefits by \$600,000
- Eliminated operating expenses by \$200,000

Research Information and Databases - Library

- Original: \$500,000 Revised \$0
- Eliminated operating expenses by \$500,000

Research Systems Support – Core Facilities

- Original: \$500,000 Revised \$0
- Eliminated operating expenses by \$500,000

UTAH STATE UNIVERSITY

Original: \$4,000,000 Revised: \$1,600,000

Graduate Program Support

- Original: \$4,000,000 Revised \$1,600,000
- Reduced salaries, wages, & benefits by \$2,050,000
- Reduced operating expenses by \$350,000

UNIVERSITY OF UTAH

\$2,400,000 (60%)

Research Excellence \$1,400,000

Description – Funding will be used to recruit and retain faculty in departments where we have strategic PhD/Research programs. As Utah's only university currently classified as a very high research institute, it is important that we not only maintain the quality of our research faculty and education program as compared to peer institutions, but that we strive to increase our

prestige and research funding. To accomplish this, we must recruit and be able to retain top faculty in strategic research areas. The Transformative Excellence Program (TEP) allows us to build strength in strategic interdisciplinary areas that will enhance our preeminence. These faculty are the key to successful education of future researchers and faculty who will carry out the discoveries needed for innovation and commercialization. The areas we are focusing on are Society, Water and Climate, Lifespan Health and Wellness, Big Data, Biodiversity, Health Policy and Economics and Biophysics.

Assessment – We will measure the success of this funding by hiring and retaining key faculty in strategic research areas. Increases in grant funding as well as attracting top graduate students will also measure success.

Budgetary Plan – Salaries, Wages & Benefits	\$ 1,200,000
Operating Expense	<u>\$ 200,000</u>
Total	\$ 1,400,000

Graduate Program Expansion and Support \$800,000

Description – As a research institution, the U's mission includes educating future faculty. Top graduate students in Ph.D. programs receive graduate stipends as part of their participation in Ph.D. education. The resources to fund these stipends have not kept pace with amounts needed to match the national average for Ph.D. students. This leaves us at a disadvantage for recruiting the caliber of graduate students we need both to maintain the prestige of our programs and to retain quality faculty. We need to be able to recruit talented students and expand student recruitment in key areas, such as STEM, to meet needs of the workforce including the next generation of STEM faculty. The additional graduate students in key areas will also help us to be able to increase the support for undergraduate students as these graduate students fulfill the teaching part of their training. We will be able to reduce the size of students sections in areas such as chemistry and biology as well as expand successful math programs such as match for engineers.

Assessment – Success will be measured by our ability to recruit top student talent for key Ph.D. programs as well as student graduation and job placement.

Budgetary Plan – Salaries, Wages & Benefits	\$ 800,000
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Professional Graduate Program Support \$200,000

Description – The University of Utah educates many of the students who receive advanced professional graduate degrees which are in high demand by Utah businesses and industries. To ensure that the demand is met, additional faculty are being added in areas such as nursing, pharmacy, other health science fields, and Earth Sciences.

Assessment – Success will be measured by hiring and retaining key faculty in these areas and the increased number of qualified students who can be recruited and successfully graduated in these strategic, high demand professional fields.

Budgetary Plan – Salaries, Wages & Benefits \$ 200,000

UTAH STATE UNIVERSITY

\$1,600,000 (40%)

Graduate Program Support \$1,600,000

Description – Any funding ear-marked for graduate programs presents a tremendous opportunity for the university to strengthen its academic graduate offerings and opportunities for students throughout the university’s family of programs. Departments that offer graduate programs continually strive for excellence. \$725,000 of these funds will provide graduate students with expanded opportunities, will provide assistantships, and will alleviate some of the struggles some programs have had with accreditation standards. The university used these funds in FY16 to support 21 new assistantships, spread across five colleges. The assistantships funded 13 PhD and 8 MS students working on 13 different projects including projects in Aerospace, System-on-chip Security, and Communicate Disorders.

\$725,000 was used under the direction of the Provost’s Office to cluster higher faculty members in critical areas to allow the university to be responsive to training and industry needs. The funding was used to support 6 faculty lines. Four of the faculty hires were part of the cluster hire in water research in the College of Science, College of Natural Resources, and the College of Agriculture and Applied Sciences. Additionally, these funds will support a new faculty position in Neuroscience and a position in Nutrition and gut microbiota and health. Finally, \$150,000 was used to support the library in new opportunities for subscriptions.

Outcomes – The University has identified several programs that need investment of faculty positions. These positions provide instruction as well as research in some cases. Some departments have instructional shortages because of increasing student enrollments; new faculty and instructors can be assigned courses and laboratory instruction that reduce bottlenecks. Other departments have expanded programs that enhance the land-grant mission of the institution; new faculty will bring additional visibility and vitality to these programs. The potential for return-on-investment for the state is high.

Many of the faculty targeted will bring existing research programs and projects with them. These programs generally include graduate research assistantships. This will be in immediate benefit of these funds. Programs receiving new positions will gain faculty capacity, providing students with new or enhanced learning possibilities. Students will have improved pathways to graduation as well as greater opportunities for out-of-class experiences.

Assessment – Number of faculty hired, student credit hour reports, completion rate, time to completion, assistantships, student productivity (peer-reviewed publications and juried performances and exhibitions), qualifications of incoming students.

<i>Budgetary Plan</i> – Salaries, Wages & Benefits	\$ 1,450,000
Operating Expenses	\$ <u>150,000</u>
Total	\$ 1,600,000