

January 13, 2015

MEMORANDUM

TO: State Board of Regents

FROM: David L. Buhler

SUBJECT: USHE – Legislative Priorities for 2016

The 2016 Session of the Utah State Legislature will commence on Monday, January 25, continuing through Thursday, March 10. According to the consensus revenue estimates prepared by the Governor's Office of Management and Budget and Office of Legislative Fiscal Analyst, the combined General Fund and Education Fund surplus from FY 2015 and projected revenue growth in FY 2016 and FY 2017 provide a total of \$180 million in new one-time funds and \$380 million in new ongoing funds. The Governor has recommended \$49 million in new on-going funds and \$14.9 million in one-time funds for the Utah System of Higher Education (USHE). Additionally, the Governor recommended funding the Salt Lake Community College CTE Center at Westpointe and the Utah Valley University Performing Arts Building, the top two 2016 capital development priorities of the Board of Regents.

Although there are many competing priorities that surface during the legislative session, I am optimistic there is an opportunity for increased funding of Higher Education. The Commissioner's Office is working closely with institution Presidents and their staffs, and student leaders to ensure consistent messaging and strategy during the 2016 legislative session.

Legislative Preview Events

The Board of Regents, along with USHE presidents, held five regional legislative briefings at USHE institutions attended by Regents, Presidents, Trustees, the Commissioner's Office, and legislators. At these briefings the Regents' budget priorities and other issues were discussed.

On January 15 a legislative preview event will be held with Wayne S. Niederhauser, Utah Senate President and Gregory H. Hughes, Speaker of the House. Regents, Trustees and Presidents are invited to the event to further advocate the USHE agenda. **Regents, Trustees and Presidents are also invited to attend the annual Higher Education Day luncheon with legislators in the Capitol Rotunda on Friday, February 19.** Advocacy will continue throughout the legislative session in coordination with the institutions.

The Commissioner's Office continues to work with Education First, Prosperity 2020 and other education interests to advocate the budget priorities of the Board of Regents and the Governor's 66% by 2020 goal.

The Commissioner's Office, Presidents and their staffs, will be closely monitoring legislation that could impact the Utah System of Higher Education throughout the legislative session. With Assistant Commissioner Spencer Jenkins' assistance, I will prepare and distribute each Wednesday a weekly report

in our Higher Ed Matters newsletter on the status of higher education priorities and other issues of interest for distribution to Regents, Presidents, and Trustees.

Commissioner's Recommendation

1. Endorse the budget and capital facilities priorities of the Utah System of Higher Education for the 2016 Session of the Utah State Legislature as adopted by the Board on September 18, 2015, and any subsequent updates adopted by the Board.
2. The Regents, Commissioner and staff, Presidents and institutional representatives unite behind the system budget and capital development priorities in their advocacy with the Legislature.
3. Authorize the Commissioner, in consultation with the Presidents, to monitor, support, or oppose on a case-by-case basis, other legislation that may be introduced during the 2016 legislative session.
4. Request the Commissioner's Office provide the Board with regular reports during the legislative session regarding items of interest to the Utah System of Higher Education.

David L. Buhler
Commissioner of Higher Education

DLB/SJ