

January 13, 2015

MEMORANDUM

TO: State Board of Regents
FROM: David L. Buhler
SUBJECT: Utah College Application Week Report 2015

Issue

The goal of Utah College Application Week (UCAW) is to provide every high school senior at our partner schools the opportunity to complete at least one viable college or university application during the school day in a school computer lab or library. A special focus is placed on students who would be the first in their families to attend, low-income students, or students who may not have otherwise considered applying. This report summarizes the outcomes of Utah College Application Week 2015.

Background

The American College Application Campaign (ACAC) is a national initiative of the American Council on Education (ACE) to increase the number of first-generation and low-income students who pursue a postsecondary education. The purpose of this initiative is to help high school seniors navigate the college admissions process and ensure each participating student submits at least one college admissions application during the school day throughout the designated college application week. Utah joined ACAC in 2013 and has experienced exponential growth of partner high schools and participating students. Three years ago we piloted the program with three school districts and eight high schools. In 2015 we partnered with 24 school districts and several public charter schools for a total of 85 participating school sites.

Utah College Application Week (UCAW) was held November 9-20, 2015; partner schools used the expanded two week time frame to focus first on awareness and student requirements for submitting a complete college application followed by dedicated time in the school library or computer lab for students to fill out and submit a college application. In addition to college applications, students began their Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA) by registering for an Federal Student Aid (FSA) ID. Students were also encouraged to begin applying for scholarships, including the Regents' Scholarship. Media coverage, newspaper articles, news segments, and dignitary appearances at high schools spanned the month of November, aligning with Governor Gary Herbert proclaiming November 2015 Utah College Application Month, as well as similar declarations from President Obama and the White House.

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 report, and note that further follow-up will be handled by the Commissioner's Office as part of the Board's participation strategic objective.

David L. Buhler
Commissioner of Higher Education

DLB/JH/HD
Attachment

Utah College Application Week Report to the State Board of Regents 2015

Background

The American College Application Campaign (ACAC) is national initiative of the American Council on Education (ACE) to increase the number of first-generation and low-income students who pursue a postsecondary education. The purpose of this initiative is to help high school seniors navigate the college admissions process and ensure each participating student submits at least one college admissions application during the school day throughout the designated College Application timeframe. Utah joined ACAC in November 2013 with Utah College Application Week (UCAW) and has continued to expand with partnerships, programming, and public relations and media coverage.

UCAW 2015 Planning and Activities

Throughout the spring of 2015, public high schools and districts were recruited to join the 2015 College Application Week campaign. On May 19, 2015, USHE launched Utah College Application Week with a training and planning meeting for high school site coordinators and teams. This training was recorded and the video file placed online for reference and future viewing by site teams. The Utah College Application Week Program Manager, Heidi Doxey, created a 100+ page *Site Coordinator Training and Implementation Manual* which contains information and templates participating high schools can use to develop their own plan for incorporating UCAW programming within their school. The manual includes: timelines, pre-event awareness and activities, application requirements, fees and waiver information, PR and media guidelines, program models, data tracking requirements, and post-UCAW programming such as FAFSA Completion and College Decision Day. Additionally, templates for letters, postcards, social media posts, and other documents on financial aid for parents and students were developed and distributed electronically so UCAW site coordinators could edit with their own school-specific information. On September 22 and 23, 2015, additional training for site coordinator teams was held via an in-person training at the Office of the Commissioner and through an online webinar. Attendees were given additional training and support on FAFSA Federal Student Aid (FSA) ID registration, the nuts and bolts of completing college and university applications, fee waivers, data tracking, and PR and social media ideas. Additionally, through September and October, the Utah College Application Week Program Manager traveled to multiple districts to provide additional training and support to site teams, particularly those that were new UCAW partners.

Participating school sites (listed below) agreed to set aside time and space during the school day with computer and internet access, and provided school personnel and volunteer support to assist seniors in filling out and submitting at least one college application during the designated UCAW weeks. The schools launched college awareness activities for all students during the week prior including lunch-time activities, assemblies, announcements and school videos, posters and school-wide door decorating contests. Most sites brought entire English or other core or advisory classes to the library or computer lab to complete college applications. A few schools such as Taylorsville High, Wasatch High, and Pine View High, were able to support the entire senior class at one time through use of individual laptops, Chrome Books, or iPads. Several high schools asked students to indicate where they wanted to apply and called them to the computer labs in those groups during non-core classes, garnering additional support from their teachers. During these sessions, representatives from the college or university often assisted students in completing

their applications. Participating high school seniors, volunteers and site teams were surveyed about their experience in an effort to make improvements for the continued implementation and expansion in 2016. A Scantron bubble-sheet survey was distributed to each student participant and data from these surveys are still being collected and processed, which includes the number of first generation college students, and number of applications completed and submitted, as reported by students.

2015 School Sites

Alpine School District Lone Peak High	Logan City School District Logan High	San Juan School District Monticello High Monument Valley High Navajo Mountain High San Juan High Whitehorse High
Canyons School District Alta High Brighton High Corner Canyon High Hillcrest High Jordan High	Millard School District Millard High School	Sevier School District Cedar Ridge High North Sevier High Richfield High South Sevier High
Carbon School District Carbon High	Murray School District Murray High	South Sanpete School District Gunnison Valley High Manti High
Charter School American International School of Utah American Leadership Academy Maeser Preparatory Academy Providence Hall High Salt Lake School for the Performing Arts	Nebo School District Maple Mountain High Payson High Salem Hills High Spanish Fork High Springville High	South Summit School District South Summit High
Davis School District Bountiful High Clearfield High Davis High Layton High Mountain High Northridge High Renaissance Syracuse High Viewmont High Woods Cross High	North Sanpete School District North Sanpete High	Tooele School District Dugway High Grantsville High Stansbury High Tooele High Wendover High
Grand County School District Grand County High	Ogden School District Ben Lomond High George Washington High Ogden High	Wasatch School District Wasatch High

Granite School District Connection High Cottonwood High Cyprus High Granger High Hunter High Kearns High Olympus High Skyline High Taylorsville High	Provo School District Independence High Provo High Timpview High	Washington School District Desert Hills High Pine View High Snow Canyon High
Iron School District Canyon View High Parowan High Cedar City High	Salt Lake School District East High West High Highland High Horizonte High	Weber School District Bonneville High Fremont High Roy High Weber High
Jordan School District Bingham High Copper Hills High Herriman High Riverton High West Jordan High		

Structures Facilitating Success

Overall, this was a tremendously successful third year of Utah College Application Week and ideas were gathered for further refinements to the processes. The sites with the best results had strong school administration (principal, vice principal) support and innovative and encouraging district leadership. Sites with these individuals in place had a higher percentage of their senior class participate, more applications submitted, smoother programming, and were more likely to include Utah College Application Week as an extension of college readiness efforts already in place in the district and school. These schools and districts were also more likely to encourage the district foundation or local business coalitions to set aside funds to help pay the application fee for underserved students from low socio-economic backgrounds. Having high school administration, school district, and school board support and participation during Utah College Application Week resulted in more students understanding the importance of submitting a college application, and more parents understanding the required information needed for their student to complete an application (for example, knowing a social security number, driver's license information, city/state of birth, application fee payment, etc.). Several school districts were able to garner significant funds through donations by the district foundation or businesses to help students unable to afford a college application fee.

Many districts were involved in media and social media campaigns which involved high schools, communities, and businesses in theirUCAW programming. All public relations and media events were spearheaded by Melanie Heath, USHE Director of Communications, and Love Communications, the advertising agency serving USHE on this project. On November 5, 2015, President Deneece G. Huftalin from Salt Lake Community College and Danie Natter, counselor at Kearns High School, appeared on

KUTV's "Fresh Living" segment to discuss and promote Utah College Application Week. Commissioner David L. Buhler appeared on KSL on November 9, 2015 promotingUCAW and "Good4Utah" did a segment on Utah College Application Week as well. In addition, newspaper articles appeared in the *Salt Lake Tribune*, *Deseret News*, *Carbon County Sun Advocate*, *St. George News*, *Park City Record*, and *Moab Times* as well as other local newspapers and media outlets. Love Communications organized additional radio coverage, including sponsorships and six "live broadcast" events held at Cottonwood High, Kearns High, Provo High, Bingham High, Herriman High, and Corner Canyon High throughout Utah College Application Week. Radio DJs interviewed students, counselors, teachers, and/or administration to discuss applying for college,UCAW, and students' post-high school plans. Higher Education dignitary appearances at events included: Tami Pyfer from the Utah Governor's Office, Salt Lake Community College President Deneece G. Huftalin, Snow College President Gary Carlston, Southern Utah University President Scott Wyatt, Utah State University-Eastern Vice Chancellor Greg Dart, Utah Valley University President Matthew Holland, and Weber State University President Chuck Wight. Numerous other city mayor and other community or college and university representatives also spoke to students about the importance of college.

In support of these College Application Week initiatives across the state, Governor Gary Herbert declared November 2015 "Utah College Application Month."

Next Steps

- Finalize data reporting, share outcomes and lessons learned with stakeholders. Participating high schools will each receive a school-specific report and district report for their own comparison. All participating sites will receive a state-wide report.
- CreateUCAW Site Application for 2016 program to strengthen and build upon programs already in place in Utah high schools and incorporate FAFSA completion programming into Utah College Application Week.
- Define new survey method to receive data responses in real-time to benefit individual high schools and school districts, as well as generate reporting information in a faster time-frame.
- Recruit additional sites and districts for 2016 participation; focus on rural areas and community organizations that focus on a specific population for education access and success.
- Add activities and programming for junior high schools, middle schools, and elementary school participation.
- Work with USHE institutions to improve their on-line application and enrollment process with specific focus on Concurrent Enrollment students and electronic transcript submission.
- Launch our 2016 program in May and September with site team training for our Utah College Application Week.
- ExpandUCAW programming to include entire month of November to align with initiatives in the Utah Governor's Office and the White House.