

January 13, 2016

MEMORANDUM

TO: State Board of Regents

FROM: David L. Buhler

SUBJECT: StepUP READY Grants

Background

In 2010 Governor Herbert designated the Board of Regents as the state agency responsible for applying for, receiving, and managing the College Access Challenge Grant Program (CACG) from the U.S. Department of Education. Over the past five years, the CACG has expanded and enhanced the statewide infrastructure dedicated to significantly increasing the number of low-income and underrepresented students who are prepared to enter and be successful in postsecondary education.

Since 2010, the Utah System of Higher Education (USHE) has awarded nearly \$2.3 million in CACG Improving Preparation, Access, and Communities Together (ImpACT) sub-grants to not-for-profit colleges and universities to partner with, establish, strengthen, or expand outreach and access programs.

As the CACG funds concluded in fiscal year 2015, the Utah legislature appropriated \$1 million in ongoing funds during the 2014 session to the Utah System of Higher Education to support college readiness. A significant part of this appropriation has been designated for grants that build upon the administrative structure of the ImpACT sub-grants and sustain a number of college readiness initiatives created under the CACG. More specifically, the grants will support collaboration between public education and higher education to support college readiness in the schools.

Issue

We know that the most effective college readiness efforts come as a result of strong partnerships between higher education and public education. Collaboration between K-12 and higher education institutions continually demonstrate positive outcomes, but can be difficult to initiate and sustain.

For the second year, USHE made available the StepUP READY grants. Applications from partnerships between school districts/local education authorities (LEAs) and Utah not-for-profit higher education institutions were requested in an effort to increase the number of Utah's public high school students who graduate college-ready and enroll in a post-secondary institution. \$600,000 of StepUP READY grants with up to \$50,000 (with an additional \$25,000 available for programs targeting underrepresented populations) were available to school districts/LEAs that partner with Utah not-for-profit higher education institutions. All

grants required a robust partnership between the LEAs and the not-for profit higher education institution to ensure effective and intentional efforts surrounding college preparation, enrollment, and first-year transition.

All grants also needed to be tied to college readiness objectives specified by USHE in the request for proposals (RFP). These objectives were divided into four categories: preparation, enrollment, transition, and professional development.

The RFP listed more than 20 objectives, including:

- Increase number of students who achieve ACT college-readiness benchmarks through targeted interventions and support.
- Increase number of students completing concurrent English 1010 and/or Math 1030/1040/1050 with a grade of "B" or higher.
- Increase the number of students taking STEM-related (Science Technology Engineering Math) courses in senior year.
- Increase parental engagement related to college preparation and attainment.
- Increase number of first-generation high school seniors who apply to one or more colleges/universities.
- Engage under-represented students in intentional summer programming to ease transition (note: this refers to "bridge" programs, not orientation or first-year experience).
- Engage teachers and administrators in college readiness training.

Intent to apply forms were due late June 2015 and those that met the minimum qualifications were invited to complete a full application due on September 9, 2015. A committee composed of representatives from public education, higher education, and USHE then reviewed the applications.

The review committee was comprised of:

- Dr. Kathryn McCarrie, Assistant Superintendent of Canyons School District
- Dr. Ember Conley, Superintendent of Park City School District
- Dr. James Sage, Associate Provost, Southern Utah University
- Ms. Adrienne Andrews, Chief Diversity Officer, Weber State University
- Dr. Julie Hartley, Assistant Commissioner for Outreach & Access, USHE
- Dr. Elizabeth Hitch, Associate Commissioner for Academic & Student Affairs, USHE

USHE received a total of 17 intent to apply notices of which 13 were invited to submit a full application.

- All USHE institutions, aside from Snow College, submitted an intent to apply notice.
- Intent to apply notices were also submitted by Brigham Young University & Westminster College.
- Proposed programs would provide interventions in 12 school districts.

The review committee recommended seven grants be awarded. These seven grants represent collaborations between six USHE institutions and nine school districts. Please see attachment for list of grants approved to enter into grant agreement with USHE.

Next steps:

- All grantees must enter into a grant agreement with USHE, spelling out any modifications in the application (such as expansion of programs or utilization of existing USHE programs), including data sharing, and exploring sustainability.
- With the submission of a completed grant agreement, funds will be released January 2016.
- Implementation of interventions should take place from January-December 2016.
- Reports will be due to USHE in June 2016, January 2017, and April 2017.

Commissioner's Recommendation

This is an information item; no action is required.

DLB/JH/MM
Attachment

David L. Buhler
Commissioner of Higher Education

2015/16 StepUP READY Grant Abstracts

- 1. Salt Lake Community College & Granite School District** **\$75,000**
Nancy Singer & Judy Petersen
SLCC West Valley Center
The project aims to enhance and expand upon college outreach, preparation, and readiness activities that exist within Cyprus, Hunter, Granger and Kearns High Schools by offering FAFSA completion, College Prep Math, concurrent enrollment Math 1030/1040/1050 and parental engagement activities at SLCC's new West Valley Center. The West Valley Center is conveniently located in the heart of the service areas of these four high schools at 3500 South and 5600 West in West Valley City. College outreach, preparation and readiness activities will be offered for students and their families in the evenings and on Saturdays when the high schools are not open.
- 2. Southern Utah University & Iron County School District** **\$74,977**
Leilani Nautu & Jett Warr
Step It Up – ACT Ready
A partnership between Southern Utah University (SUU) and Iron County School District (ICSD) that focuses on increasing the number of students achieving ACT college-readiness in mathematics. This will be accomplished through targeted student involvement with ACT Preparation, a Summer STEM Expo, and exposure to ACT materials and questions. In addition, improving teacher effectiveness through professional development (USOE/USHE Mathematics Endorsement courses, training in NCTM Mathematics Teaching Practices, infusing ACT questions in the curriculum) will result in higher student achievement. Motivational speakers, parent involvement, and an incentive program will elevate student tenacity to better prepare for university attendance.
- 3. University of Utah & Granite School District** **\$75,000**
Kathryn Stockton & Judy Petersen
Diversity Scholars Summer Bridge
The University of Utah Office for Equity & Diversity is committed to first-generation, underrepresented students and students of color through the Diversity Scholars Program (DS), which specifically provides academic support through a cohort model. The DS Summer Bridge is aimed at doing outreach with underrepresented students from the Granite School District. Through a partnership between the DS Program and the Granite School District, this collective effort (the Diversity Scholars Summer Bridge Program) seeks to increase college-going rates and further support the Granite School District college-going culture.
- 4. Utah State University & Cache, Box Elder, & Weber School Districts** **\$43,001**
Ben Lignugaris Kraft & Mike Lietchy
The Utah Alternative High Schools (AHSs) College Readiness Partnership
The Utah Alternative High Schools (AHSs) College Readiness Partnership is a collaboration between Utah State University and AHSs in Utah to increase the number of

underrepresented juniors and seniors who achieve ACT college-readiness benchmarks, read more proficiently, apply for college, and complete FAFSA by participation in 6 ACT online tutorials, 6 reading/content intervention sessions, 2 college application and FAFSA events, and 1 college tour. An AHS State Leadership Team aims to improve AHS students' college readiness by recommending effective strategies to prepare for and enroll in college, and developing an effective model for AHSs to implement for program sustainability

5. Utah Valley University & Provo School District \$74,968

Victor Narsimulu & Karen Brown

UVU Cultural Envoys – Provo High School Diversity Mentoring & Senior Transitions Initiative

This StepUP READY K-16 Alliance between Utah Valley University (UVU) and Provo City School District will create and implement a culture-based leadership and mentoring partnership at Provo High School (PHS) using UVU's Cultural Envoys Leadership Program and Multicultural Student Council. This approach toward more effective cultural validation is intended to expand the frontiers of students of color transitioning to college and will provide participants with the opportunity to recognize and validate their cultural norms and traditions existing outside of the classroom as sources of strength and motivation for college preparation, enrollment, academic achievement, secondary graduation and persistence in school.

6. Weber State University & Davis School District \$75,000

Amy Huntington & Christy Hutchinson

WSU Bridge to College Success

WSU Bridge to College Success will reach out to underrepresented graduating seniors in area high schools who are at risk of not enrolling at Weber State University the fall following their graduation through the following components: 1) College Bridge mentors will provide assistance with completing financial aid processes and next steps to enrollment during spring of senior year and following summer, 2) intentional orientation & transition experiences to support college success, 3) residential summer bridge program where students will learn behaviors leading to academic success and social engagement, & 4) on-going mentoring and student engagement activities during their first semester at WSU

7. Weber State University & Ogden School District *\$54,608

Rachel Bachman & Stacey Briggs

Bridge to Quantitative Literacy

This project supports the continuation of a partnership with Weber State University and Ogden High School to provide a senior-year mathematics course for students below the ACT benchmark in mathematics. The course holds college level expectations for attendance, homework completion, and grading. It explores problematic areas in mathematics by building a conceptual understanding of the material through use of interactive activities and concrete manipulatives. This project will also extend the influence of this project to all the high schools in the area by providing area high school teachers with professional development training them in the methods used in the course.

*Final award amount pending