

January 11, 2017

MEMORANDUM

TO: State Board of Regents

FROM: David L. Buhler

SUBJECT: USHE – Legislative Priorities for 2017

The 2017 Session of the Utah State Legislature will commence on Monday, January 23, continuing through Thursday, March 9. 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 2017 and projected revenue growth in FY 2017 and FY 2018 provide a total decrease of \$6 million in one-time funds and an increase of \$273 million in new ongoing funds.

The Governor has recommended \$40.7 million in new on-going funds and \$6.9 million in one-time funds for the Utah System of Higher Education (USHE). The Governor recommended the following items from the priorities approved by the Board of Regents in September 2016: a 2% merit-based salary increase, and \$11 million (\$9 million one-time, \$2 million ongoing) for the Regents' Scholarship. The Governor recommended one capital development project: \$3 million (one-time) towards the University of Utah's Medical Education & Discovery (MED)/Rehabilitation Hospital.

Although there are limited new revenues and 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 2017 legislative session.

Legislative Preview Events

The Board of Regents, along with USHE presidents, held six 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. **Regents, Trustees and Presidents are also invited to attend the annual Higher Education Day luncheon with Legislators in the Capitol Rotunda on Friday, February 17 at noon.** Advocacy will continue throughout the legislative session in coordination with the institutions.

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. During the legislative session, the Commissioner will provide weekly updates 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 2017 Session of the Utah State Legislature as adopted by the Board on September 16, 2016, 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 2017 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