

January 11, 2017

MEMORANDUM

TO: State Board of Regents

FROM: David L. Buhler

SUBJECT: Institutional Completion Update: University of Utah

Background

In July 2013, the Board of Regents unanimously passed a resolution to "Implement Strategies to Increase Completion Rates in Support of the 66% Goal." Briefly, the five specific recommendations in the resolution are that each institution:

1. Establish 15 credits hours per semester as the normal full-time course load for students.
2. Set plateau tuition levels with a focus on 12 to 15 credit hours to help students maximize their tuition dollars and their time.
3. Create semester-by-semester degree program maps with specific, recommended courses each semester and make them available to current and potential students.
4. Encourage students to enroll in an appropriate mathematics course in their first year of college.
5. Explore the feasibility of implementing reverse transfer/stackable credentials.

In 2015, the Board of Regents expanded on these initiatives in a new strategic plan titled, "Utah: A State of Opportunity." The strategic plan focused on three key areas: Affordable Participation, Timely Completion, and Innovative Discovery.

The Presidents and their administrations and faculty have taken seriously the Board's charge in the completion agenda and the new strategic plan and have been designing strategies to reach the Board's objectives. In order to support and bring to scale those institutional efforts, in FY 2016 the Utah System of Higher Education provided each institution with an Affordable Participation and Timely Completion Grant.

Issue

The Academic and Student Affairs Committee of the State Board of Regents has asked the institutions to report in more depth on the practices and policies they have implemented that are having the most impact on college participation and completion.

Representatives from the host institution, the University of Utah, will report on their initiatives to increase completion rates at the January 2017 Board of Regents meeting. They have been asked to highlight two

areas:

- one of the five strategies outlined in the 2013 completion resolution for which they have gained momentum, and
- one institution-led area for which they are demonstrating impact in retention or completion.

#### Next Steps

Over the course of the year, all remaining institutions will have a chance to report on their successful strategies to the Committee.

#### Commissioner's Recommendation

This is an information item only; no formal action by the Board is required. However, the Board is encouraged to congratulate the institutions on the progress they are making toward meeting their institutional completion goals.

---

David L. Buhler  
Commissioner of Higher Education

DLB/JH