

January 10, 2018

MEMORANDUM

TO: State Board of Regents  
FROM: David L. Buhler  
SUBJECT: Modifications to 2025 Strategic Plan

Issue

During the discussion session of the November 2017 Board of Regents meeting, the Regents discussed modifying the Regents' 2025 Strategic Plan to:

1. Change the strategic priority "Innovative Discovery" to "Research and Workforce."
2. Include "High Impact Practices" (previously listed under "Innovative Discovery") under the "Timely Completion" strategic objective.

These proposed changes to the Regents' 2025 Strategic Plan require approval by the Board. The Regents' Executive Committee and the Council of Presidents previously discussed making these changes and there was support from those groups for the proposed changes.

Background

The Utah System of Higher Education institutions play a significant role in the development of Utah's economy, both through the research and development of its research universities (University of Utah and Utah State University) and by providing graduates at all levels that enter Utah's workforce and fuel the state's economy.

Given the pivotal role system institutions play in meeting critical workforce needs, workforce and the economy is the focus of one of three newly formed Regent working groups. This working group will consider how Utah's public colleges and universities are meeting critical workforce needs. The formation of this working group affirms the strategic importance of the focus on Research and Workforce in system plans going forward.

While the 2025 strategic plan attempted to convey the connections between research, highly trained graduates and meeting the state's workforce needs through the focus on "Innovative Discovery," the focus area was not well understood by the public in general, stakeholders, and constituents. "Research and Workforce" better conveys the intent of this focus area of the strategic plan. Because High Impact Practices are strategies most directly tied to increasing student retention and completion, the inclusion of High Impact Practices within the "Timely Completion" focus area of the Regents' strategic plan is most appropriate.

Commissioner's Recommendation

The Commissioner recommends that the Board of Regents approve replacing the strategic priority of "Innovative Discovery" with "Research and Workforce" in the Board's 2025 Strategic Plan and that the Commissioner develop and provide recommendations to the Board for metrics by which progress on the "Research and Workforce" strategic priority will be assessed no later than the January 2019 meeting. Finally, the Commissioner recommends that the metrics for High Impact Practices, as approved at the November 2017 meeting of the Board, be moved to the "Timely Completion" strategic priority.

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David L. Buhler  
Commissioner of Higher Education

DLB/BKC