

**DRAFT**

2018  
Progress  
Report



Utah: A State of Opportunity

Utah State Board of Regents Strategic Plan 2025

## Renewed Focus

The Board of Regents adopted a ten-year strategic plan in 2016, and it provided an update to its efforts in a 2017 progress report. In 2018, the Board has renewed its focus on its primary mission to “provide strategic leadership and link system capacity to the economy and workforce needs” (according to the duties defined in 53B-1-103-3 of the Utah Code).

### *Strategic Goal*

With that in mind, the Board reaffirms its existing strategic goal:

**Increase the educational attainment of Utahns to enhance their overall quality of life, and to meet Utah’s current and future workforce needs.**

### *Strategic Objectives*

The last year has seen significant effort by the Board to ensure a disciplined focus across its strategic objectives:

**Affordable Access**—The Board of Regents wants to ensure all Utahns can affordably access a quality postsecondary education with the tools, resources, and information that start them on the path to completion, especially for underserved populations and first-generation college students.

**Timely Completion**—Utah’s public colleges and universities help students realize their potential by supporting them on their path to an on-time graduation.

**Workforce & Research**—Higher education institutions enable Utahns to adapt to the seismic shifts in today’s global economy. The base of Utah’s economic activity is formed by students becoming lifelong learners and creators through cutting-edge research and real workforce opportunities while in college.

**Capacity & Growth**—Utah uniquely stands out across the country with its white-hot economy amidst an increasing population, buttressed by a vibrant and growing number of K-12 students. While positive, these factors are also stretching the capacity limits of Utah’s public colleges and universities, requiring cost-effectiveness and thoughtful oversight of limited resources to ensure a student’s quality education.

## 2018–19 Priority Initiatives

In May 2018, the Board of Regents identified priority initiatives that will most influence the Board’s strategic goal. To accomplish these priorities, existing resources within the Commissioner’s Office will be identified, or, if necessary, additional resources will be requested from the state.

## Immediate Priority: Affordable Student Access

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In order to achieve the Board's strategic goal, it is crucial that the pipeline of high school students going to college be expanded to include more students who are from low-income, underserved, first-generation, and historically underrepresented populations.

### Utah College Acceptance Letters

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A basic step in helping set proper college-going expectations among high school students is affirming the opportunities for all high school graduates to attend Utah's colleges and universities. At a time when a large majority of jobs being filled requires a college education, a notification to all high school seniors and their parents reminding them of the affordable and accessible college opportunities in Utah is one obvious step in reinforcing a college-seeking culture and improving the college-going rate of high school seniors. Expanding the pipeline of incoming students is a foundational step to increasing college attainment rates in Utah by reaching out to high school seniors.

In partnership with the Utah State Board of Education, the Board of Regents will automatically notify high school seniors as they begin their last year of high school that they qualify and are eligible to attend college in Utah. This will include a comprehensive welcome letter for every high school senior and their parent, which will notify them of their acceptance into any of the Utah's open access universities and colleges upon graduation from high school. Additionally, students who meet the admissions eligibility of the selective admissions universities will be notified of early acceptance. The inaugural letter will be sent to the graduating class of 2020. States like Idaho and South Dakota with similar initiatives have seen a significant increase in overall college enrollment.

**Primary Goal:** 5% increase in college admissions applications to USHE schools by Fall 2020 (including the number of students who enroll or defer in Fall 2020, disaggregated by income status and underrepresented populations).

### Student Aid and Tuition Policy Review and Evaluation

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The return on investment for a college education for both the student and the state continues to be high, but paying for a college education can be a challenge for Utah families, with many believing higher education is not affordable for them.

Paying for college is a complex function of tuition and financial aid, combined with fees, housing, transportation, and other personal costs. The Board of Regents is developing a comprehensive evaluation and possible redesign of existing tuition and student aid policies. In early 2018, the Board took initial steps to seek a more deliberate allocation of tuition waivers—a

state-sanctioned mechanism for student scholarships and aid. Subsequently, the Board recognizes an urgent need to understand the impact of tuition waiver use in relation to the economic return to the state, the student, and the institution. The evaluation will also address how tuition waivers fit into broader affordability strategies of the Board.

**Primary Goal:** Baseline study that captures the cost/benefit of discounted tuition to the state, determines the multiplier effect of nonresident student graduates to USHE institutions and the state, and provides recommendations for policy and performance metrics on affordability.

## StepUp Schools: Targeted Outreach

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StepUp to Higher Education is the Board’s current statewide junior high and high school outreach for college preparation and access. StepUp supports programs including the Regents’ Scholarship, Concurrent Enrollment, StepUp Utah Scholars, Utah College Application Week, and FAFSA Completion Open Houses. The StepUp Schools Initiative leverages current efforts in a more comprehensive, streamlined, and focused outreach to targeted partner schools where the most impact can occur with better-defined outcomes.

For the 2018-19 school year, the Board is partnering with 16 high schools and their 19 “feeder” junior high schools. The schools were identified using data such as the number of students qualifying for free and reduced lunch, race/ethnicity indicators, federal financial aid (FAFSA) completion rates, and low college enrollment rates of their graduates.

Partner schools will receive tailored, comprehensive outreach, counselor training, on-the-ground support for college-readiness activities, and grants to support college readiness and professional development. A data-driven approach will help administrators work with students who can most benefit from programs like Concurrent Enrollment and the Regents’ Scholarship. StepUp Ambassadors, a near-peer mentoring program, will be placed in select partner schools to assist in personalizing outreach efforts to first-generation, low-income, and other marginalized, historically underrepresented student populations.

Commissioner’s staff engaged with all partner schools in Spring 2018. Extensive follow-up and program customization efforts are underway in preparation for the upcoming school year. This initiative requires a significant priority shift in current outreach resources to achieve the initiative’s goals.

**Primary Goal:** School-specific goals for each of the 16 partner high schools are being identified in the following areas:

- Increasing the number and percent of students enrolling in Concurrent Enrollment classes,
- Increasing the number and percent of students qualifying for the Regents’ Scholarship,
- Increasing the number and percent of students applying to college,
- Increasing the number and percent of students applying for the FAFSA, and
- Increasing the number and percent of students enrolling in college.

## Long-term Priority: Credential Stackability, Transfer, and Data Innovation

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The Board of Regents prioritized two multi-year initiatives that require further development and scope definition.

### **Increase awards in high-demand, undersupplied occupational areas via stackable bachelor's degrees, associate degrees, and certificates**

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The Board has prioritized increasing opportunities for students to complete baccalaureate degrees in key occupational areas and, as appropriate, provide flexible requirements in the first two years, thus increasing the stackability of credentials throughout the state.

A key part of this effort will be to establish a new kind of four-year degree built on flexible preparation in the first two years and strong foundations of applied knowledge within the discipline. The degree relies heavily on partnerships with K-12, UTech colleges, and industry that link students to the discipline. The degree also accommodates a stackable pathway via certificate and/or associate degree programs from institutions throughout the state.

Revisions to Regents' Policy R401 is a necessary first step to establish standardized guidance in developing and revising baccalaureate programs that work across institutions and with state economic development programs such as Talent Ready Utah, Strategic Workforce Investments, and the Talent Development and Retention Strategy Initiative. This guidance will help ensure alignment with state and regional economic development priorities. As the policy is established in the near-term, a more comprehensive implementation plan will be developed that will measure the output and stackability of this new type of degree.

### **Statewide data and technology strategy to support predictive analytics, guided pathways, and transfer articulations**

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A statewide data and technology strategy is foundational to making any significant systemwide strides in increasing the state's attainment rates. For the past several years, USHE institutions have pursued newfound data solutions to enhance student learning, help students identify degree pathways and stay on-track to graduation, reduce time and cost to completion, and to drive operational efficiencies in the face of continued student enrollment growth.

However, institutions often face significant barriers in implementing effective data solutions due to factors often outside their direct influence, including: a high transfer rate of Utah students (two-thirds of Utah college students attend two or more institutions); a diversifying student population; the inability to track students across the system; the lack of a common language, definitions, and metrics that could make analyses of student pathways stronger; and sometimes a lack of local technological expertise to customize data products to meet

institutional needs as well as the need to provide critical pathways to the state's workforce. The implementation of a Board initiative provides governance and scale that supports institutional efforts. A statewide data and technology strategy would include:

- Cost savings efforts through common IT strategies, coordinated licensing and implementation of enterprise data solutions, and effective IT investment in enterprise applications, standards, security, and infrastructure.
- Data quality and real-time analytics that provide transparency and intra-system compatibility.
- Personalize the student experience in advising, operations, and just-in-time intervention.
- Data management and reporting that provides clear performance and value tracking for key stakeholders (legislators, Board of Regents, Boards of Trustees, business advisory boards, etc.)
- Enhance platforms for public/private partnerships that increase and scale the availability and flexibility of courses for students, leverage the ecosystem for nontraditional teaching excellence, and address new and rapidly evolving curriculum needs to better serve students.
- Improved articulation and transfer of students among USHE and UTech institutions that enables the flexible, innovative and competency-based delivery methods that better supports today's variety of students.
- IT infrastructure with the requisite security and usability.

## Ongoing Efforts: Communications, Career Exploration and Advising, Student Mental Health, and Completion Strategies

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Several continuing initiatives have already been prioritized by the Board of Regents in the past year:

### **Strategic Communications Plan / 50th Anniversary of the Board of Regents in 2019**

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To increase momentum for the state-level strategic direction of higher education, USHE has engaged with a communications agency to develop a robust communications strategy that will heighten the engagement of stakeholders, promote the importance of achieving a higher education and being prepared for college, speak to the value-add of state-level higher education leadership, and promote the initiatives and projects the Board will be implementing in the coming months.

Different from institutional marketing and recruitment efforts, the Board of Regents operates at a state level and advocates for the importance of higher education in general. This campaign strategy will be structured with an overarching advocacy message for higher education in Utah with actionable initiatives supporting that message. This structure sets up a clear, proactive, and compelling narrative for the Board's vision for higher education in Utah. This will also be the springboard communications effort as the Board enters its 50th year in 2019.

## **Strengthen career pathways by improving high school advising on college and career options, and enhancing UtahFutures with more robust career exploration tools**

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UtahFutures.org is Utah's career information system for students, job seekers, employment service providers, educational institutions, and more. The use of UtahFutures has increased significantly since the Legislature gave responsibility for it to the Utah Education and Telehealth Network (UETN): registered accounts have tripled in two years, and users are spending significantly more time on the site. Despite the previously-inherited challenges, UETN's leadership has resulted in UtahFutures becoming the backbone of student and parent college- and career-planning efforts. However, the current career planning and exploration tools lack the depth and data on local workforce patterns and total cost of college attendance information for Utah.

The Board, in partnership with K-12, the Department of Workforce Services, Talent Ready Utah, and UtahFutures, will implement a workforce exploration tool based on state data on postsecondary completers and their employment patterns. This tool is easily accessible online, allowing users to explore and compare potential educational and career opportunities. The tool will inform high school students of the return on investment and the projected breakeven cost of specific programs based on current state graduate and wage data.

## **Student mental health recommendations adopted in September 2017**

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In September 2017, the Board of Regents approved the following recommendations of the Regents' Mental Health Working Group, directing institutions to:

1. Assess the mental health and wellness needs of USHE students
2. Improve mental health education at USHE institutions
3. Increase access to mental health services
4. Develop institutional five-year mental health implementation plans

Institutions will create five-year implementation plans based on the recommendations, which will incorporate the strategies outlined.

## **Completion strategies—specifically, seeking baseline data on student transfer and credit articulation**

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A student's path toward completion is a complicated and often circuitous journey. In 2013, the Board took steps to systematically help students reach timely completion goals through a number of initiatives including 15 to Finish (now 30 in 3), plateau tuition, degree maps (now guided pathways), math pathways, and reverse transfer. The Commissioner's Office will continue implementing these programs and measuring impact as part of its annual completion report.

### *Transfer*

In response to recommendations from the Board’s Timely Completion Work Group, transfer will be a prime concern going forward. Transfer directly relates to both guided pathway and data strategy initiatives. Strategies include:

- Purchase and implementation of a systemwide transfer platform that strengthens course-to-course articulations and includes program-to-program articulations.
- Development of a completion metric that tracks transfer paths as a part of a student’s path to an on-time graduation and that will broaden the view of successful preparation for four-year programs by two-year institutions.
- Implementation of a systemwide student identifier in place of unique institutional student identifiers.

### *High Impact Practices*

In 2017, the Board recommended all students experience two high impact practices (HIPs) throughout a program of study—one within the first 30 credits and another within their major. The Commissioner’s Office will create a guideline to determine what qualifies as a high-impact experience and will measure the effectiveness of these experiences in relation to retention and completion.

## Measuring Higher Education

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The Board of Regents continues its commitment to authoritative data collection and reporting.

The USHE Data Book is an exhaustive data collection that has been annually published since 1987. Several dashboards are available online related to tuition, enrollments, and the employment and wages of college graduates. The Board also collaborates and provides data services for the legislature, state and national agencies, and several non-government entities.

The Board has charged the Commissioner of Higher Education with compiling the highest-priority metrics that are the best indicators of performance and viability of higher education in Utah, in the most accessible form possible. The following table provides an updated revision to the metrics coinciding with the refocused objectives. The metrics reflect the Board’s efforts to provide consistent measures that inform state leaders, including the Governor’s Office and Utah Legislature. With this iteration, the Board will further develop the benchmarks and goals to include the same measures for USHE institutions during 2018-19, along with accompanying online dashboards on HigherEdUtah.org.



Affordable Access

Timely Completion

	College Participation of High School Graduates	Affordable Tuition & Fees	Time to Graduation
<i>Metric</i>	<b>College Participation of High School Graduates</b>	<b>Affordable Tuition &amp; Fees</b>	<b>Time to Graduation</b>
<i>Definition</i>	Percentage of Utah high school graduates who enroll in college within 5 years of high school graduation	Percentage of full-time, resident students who do not require loans, grants, or scholarships to pay for college	Number of semesters needed to complete a college degree
<i>Benchmark</i>	Current average enrollment within 5 years for 2007-2012 high school graduates  Value: 69%	Percentage of USHE full-time, resident students who pay full-price  Value: 19%	Standard: Bachelor's degree: 12 semesters Associate degree: 6 semesters  Average Value: 2017 Benchmark  Bachelor's Average 11.8 Median 11.5 (50%) 55.48% 12 Semesters or less  Associate Average 9.7 Median 9.0 (50%) 19.54% have 6 Semesters or less
<i>Goal</i>	75% of the Utah high school graduating class of 2020 will enroll in college within 5 years of high school graduation	Minimum of 20% of full-time, resident students will not need loans, grants, or scholarships to pay for college	Goal: 70% of students completing their first bachelor's degree will do so in 12 semesters or less by 2025  30% of students completing their first degree as an associate degree will do so in 6 semesters or less by 2025
<i>Sources</i>	<a href="https://higheredutah.org/wp-content/uploads/2013/03/2017-2-Five-Year-Participation-and-Completion-David-Ma.pdf">https://higheredutah.org/wp-content/uploads/2013/03/2017-2-Five-Year-Participation-and-Completion-David-Ma.pdf</a>	<a href="https://higheredutah.org/wp-content/uploads/2013/03/2017-3-Unmet-Financial-Need-Joe-Curtin.pdf">https://higheredutah.org/wp-content/uploads/2013/03/2017-3-Unmet-Financial-Need-Joe-Curtin.pdf</a>	<a href="https://higheredutah.org/pdf/reports/CompletionParticipation2017.pdf">https://higheredutah.org/pdf/reports/CompletionParticipation2017.pdf</a>

Workforce & Research

Capacity & Growth

<i>Metric</i>	<b>Return on a Student's Investment on Higher Education</b>	<b>Change in Total Cost per Award</b>	<b>Functional Cost per Student</b>
<i>Definition</i>	<b>Wage premium ratio for every \$1 of tuition paid</b>	<b>Change in total cost per award (the total awards divided by the current year's operating expenses, compared with the previous year)</b>	<b>Systemwide functional expenses per student (FTE) compared to inflation</b>
<i>Benchmark</i>	<b>Ratio of wage premium on a degree for every \$1 of tuition paid</b>  <b>Value: 6:1 for an associate degree 20:1 for a bachelor's degree</b>	<b>Annual percent change in the Higher Education Price Index (HEPI) for the corresponding year</b>  <b>Value: 3.7% increase in HEPI for 2017</b>	<b>Annual percent change in the Higher Education Price Index (HEPI) for the corresponding year</b>  <b>Value: 3.7% increase in HEPI for 2017</b>
<i>Goal</i>	<b>At a minimum maintain a 6:1 ROI for an associate degree and 20:1 for a bachelor's degree</b>	<b>Annual percentage change in total cost per award be at least 5% less than the average annual percentage change in HEPI</b>  <b>(Example FY17 Goal: HEPI 3.7% *.95% = 3.5%)</b>	<b>The annual system percentage change in functional expenses should be less than or equal to the 5-year rolling average % change in HEPI</b>
<i>Sources</i>	<a href="https://higheredutah.org/wp-content/uploads/2018/01/2018-1-ROI-of-College-Joe-Curtin-Mike-Palica.pdf">https://higheredutah.org/wp-content/uploads/2018/01/2018-1-ROI-of-College-Joe-Curtin-Mike-Palica.pdf</a>	<a href="https://www.commonfund.org/commonfund-institute/higher-education-price-index-hepi/">https://www.commonfund.org/commonfund-institute/higher-education-price-index-hepi/</a>  <a href="https://le.utah.gov/interim/2018/pdf/00001219.pdf">https://le.utah.gov/interim/2018/pdf/00001219.pdf</a>	<a href="https://www.commonfund.org/commonfund-institute/higher-education-price-index-hepi/">https://www.commonfund.org/commonfund-institute/higher-education-price-index-hepi/</a>

## Capacity & Growth

<i>Metric</i>	<b>Space Utilization</b>	<b>Return on State Tax Fund Investment in Higher Education</b>
<i>Definition</i>	<b>Average instruction-related classroom use (calculated by multiplying an institution's fall classroom utilization rate and station occupancy rate)</b>	<b>Ratio of increased tax contributions over 30 years as a result of earning a higher education credential to state tax fund appropriations to higher education</b>
<i>Benchmark</i>	<p><b>USHE Classroom Room Utilization Standard: 33.75</b></p> <p><b>USHE Classroom Station Occupancy Standard: 66.7%</b></p> <p><b>Value: varies by institution</b></p>	<p><b>Estimated 30-year ROI in tax contributions to annual state tax fund appropriation</b></p> <p><b>Value: 2:1 ROI</b></p>
<i>Goal</i>	<b>A minimum score of 22.5 (calculated by the average hours per week multiplied by the average station occupancy: 33.75 hours per week * 66.7% occupancy = 22.5)</b>	<b>Maintain a 30-year ROI of 2:1</b>
<i>Sources</i>	<a href="https://higheredutah.org/pdf/agendas/20180330/TABL_2018-03-30.pdf">https://higheredutah.org/pdf/agendas/20180330/TABL_2018-03-30.pdf</a>	<a href="https://higheredutah.org/the-roi-of-utahs-college-graduates/">https://higheredutah.org/the-roi-of-utahs-college-graduates/</a>

## Board of Regents

The Board of Regents oversees the governance of the Utah System of Higher Education (USHE). The Board is responsible for statewide planning, appointment of institutional presidents, approval of academic programs, prioritization of facilities requests, and submission of a unified budget request to the Governor and state legislature.

*Harris Simmons, Chair*

*Wilford Clyde*

*JaKell Larsen*

*Robert Prince*

*Nina Barnes, Vice Chair*

*Marlin Jensen*

*Steven Lund*

*Mark Stoddard*

*Jessalie Anderson*

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*Robert Marquardt*

*Teresa Theurer*

*Daniel Campbell*

*Patricia Jones*

*Cristina Ortega*

*Thomas Wright*

## Commissioner of Higher Education

The Commissioner of Higher Education is the chief executive officer of USHE and is appointed by the Board of Regents. The Commissioner provides statewide leadership, makes policy recommendations to the Board of Regents, and executes Board of Regents' policies and programs.

The Utah Higher Education Assistance Authority (UHEAA) and the Utah Educational Savings Plan (UESP) are also under the oversight of the Board of Regents, and both organizations help to guide Utahns through the higher education financial planning process.

*Commissioner of Higher Education David Buhler*

## Utah System of Higher Education

The Utah System of Higher Education is comprised of the eight public colleges and universities in the state:

### RESEARCH UNIVERSITIES

University of Utah—flagship; medical, dental, pharmacy, and law schools, etc. *President Ruth Watkins*

Utah State University—land grant; 33 regional sites and campuses statewide *President Noelle Cockett*

### REGIONAL UNIVERSITIES

Weber State University *Interim President Norm Tarbox*

Southern Utah University *President Scott Wyatt*

Dixie State University *President Richard "Biff" Williams*

Utah Valley University *President Astrid Tuminez*

### COMMUNITY COLLEGES

Salt Lake Community College *President Deneece Huftalin*

Snow College *President Gary Carlston*

