

September 12, 2018

MEMORANDUM

TO: State Board of Regents

FROM: David L. Buhler

SUBJECT: Access, Affordability, Completion, and Workforce Development Pass-through Funds to Institutions

Background

The Utah State Legislature provides ongoing Education Excellence/College Readiness funding to the Outreach and Access unit of the Commissioner's Office each year. Some of that funding can be used as "pass-through" money for initiatives at institutions within the Utah System of Higher Education. In 2018, institutions were eligible for up to \$100,000 for the creation of new initiatives to address priorities from the State Board of Regents' priorities of Access, Affordable Participation, Timely Completion, and Workforce Development. In order to ensure that the pass-through funds met institutional priorities as well as the Regents' strategic goals, the Commissioner's Office asked the institutional Chief Academic Officers to select one initiative or a cluster of initiatives from their institution to receive the funding (not all institutions requested pass-through funding this year.) The funds are one-time money meant to jump start ongoing, sustainable projects at the institutions. The Commissioner's Office earmarked additional pass-through funds for institutions that were willing to organize statewide meetings to address regents' priority topics on behalf of the system. Smaller amounts were also available to bring training from USHE's annual Access and Completion Retreat back to faculty and staff on the campuses.

Description

Institutional Initiatives:

Weber State University (WSU) and Southern Utah University (SUU) will use their institutional pass-through funding to develop courses for first-year students in alignment with the Regent's High Impact Practices (HIPs) strategy passed in November of 2017. Weber State University will create a digitally enhanced, high impact practice Freshmen English Composition course that will be available to most first-year students. Southern Utah University will develop a Student Connections program to increase retention of students with low admissions index scores. The program will include a high impact practice UNIV 1050 course and personal mentoring meetings with both a Student Connections Coordinator and a Peer Academic Coach. SUU will also expand its Academic Probation interventions to increase odds of completion for students who are struggling academically.

Utah Valley University (UVU), Dixie State University (DSU), and Snow College will use their funds in support of the Regents' Timely Completion working group's data strategy initiative. UVU will explore five years of predictive analytics data on course scheduling efficiencies by department. A new faculty senate committee will design interventions based on that data such as innovative course schedules, a year-round

academic calendar, flexible start and end times, cohort models, prepopulated student schedules, block schedules, critical path analyses, and scheduling policies. Dixie State University will purchase and implement an enterprise-level predictive analytics technology to link administrators, advisors, deans, faculty, other staff, and students in a coordinated student support network designed to proactively manage student success and improve timely completion. Snow will purchase a predictive analytics system to provide teaching analytics, student learning analytics, and early intervention alerts.

Utah State University is splitting its funding across three initiatives: First-generation student onboarding; implementation of the Degree Works data system that will provide guided degree pathways for students; exploration of an integrated studies degree completion alternative for students who are in good academic standing but unable to matriculate into majors.

Statewide Initiatives: Salt Lake Community College received funds to host statewide forums on Academic Scheduling (aligned with access and completion focuses) and Open Educational Resources (aligned with access and affordability). Utah State University (USU) also received funds to begin work on Competency-based General Education courses for an AS degree on behalf of all USHE institutions, in alignment with the foci on access and affordability. Salt Lake Community College received direct legislative rather than Educational Excellence pass-through funds to develop General Education courses for an AAS degree on behalf of the system. USU also began hosting bi-monthly meetings on Student Analytics for teams from each institution in support of the Regents' Timely Completion working group's data strategy.

Bringing USHE-sponsored trainings to institutions: Dixie State University and Salt Lake Community College requested funds to bring consultants to their campuses to continue training on the Beyond Financial Aid access affordability interventions begun at USHE's annual Access and Completion Retreat in May.

#### Commissioner's Recommendation

This is an information item only; no formal action by the Board is required.

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David L. Buhler  
Commissioner of Higher Education

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