

May 8, 2019

MEMORANDUM

TO: State Board of Regents

FROM: David L. Buhler

SUBJECT: USHE – FY 2020 Commissioner’s Office Draft Work Plan

Background

At its January 25, 2019 meeting the Board of Regents adopted the 2018 Annual Report. The Board also directed the Commissioner to develop a work plan that identifies deliverables (including necessary resources, milestones and timeline) in support of the Board’s Strategic Priorities. The attached draft Work Plan reflects the planned projects for this fiscal year beginning July 1, 2019, grouped in six areas:

- Access
- Transfer/Completion
- Strategic Communications
- Workforce
- Cost/Operations Efficiency
- Regents’ Policy and Audit Activities

Issue

The Work Plan will be used throughout the year to guide the work of the Commissioner’s office (OCHE) and to inform the Board on progress toward meeting its strategic objectives. Adjustments may be considered with the Board’s approval. Successful implementation requires possible staffing reassignments and budget reallocations – to be finalized in July 2019. The Work Plan considers the direction and focus of the Board and is consistent with its statutory responsibilities (Utah Code §53B-1-103), specifically:

- provide strategic leadership and link system capacity to the economy and workforce needs
- enhance the impact and efficiency of the system
- establish measurable goals and metrics and delineate the expected contributions of individual institutions of higher education toward these goals
- evaluate presidents based on institutional performance
- delegate to presidents the authority to manage the presidents’ institutions of higher education
- administer statewide functions including system data collection and reporting
- establish unified budget, finance, and capital funding priorities and practices
- provide system leadership on issues that have a system-wide impact

Commissioner's Recommendation

This is an information item only; no action is required.

David L. Buhler
Commissioner of Higher Education

DLB/SJ
Attachment



Office of the Commissioner of Higher Education - *FY20 Work Plan*

The Office of the Commissioner, under the direction of the Commissioner of Higher Education, provides staff support to the Board of Regents in carrying out its priorities for public higher education in Utah. This annual work plan reflects the efforts of the staff targeted at achieving the Board of Regents' strategic priorities and legislative mandates over the coming fiscal year beginning July 1, 2019. The Board of Regents approves the work plan's focus areas, and reviews and authorizes the Commissioner to oversee the work of the 35+ staff members. The work plan will be used throughout the year to guide the work of the Commissioner's Office and to inform the Board on its progress toward meeting its strategic objectives. Adjustments may be considered with the Board's approval.

Focus Areas: In FY 2020, The Commissioner's Office recommends six focus areas comprised of existing and new projects, prioritized with consideration of the current activities, budget, and staff in the Commissioner's Office. Projects with budget impact beyond existing staff costs identify their source(s): existing budget, unidentified, or outside funds. The *OCHE Lead* for each project has the responsibility of working with the Commissioner and executive staff to establish processes, timelines, and coordination of resources (budget, staff). Three projects have a combined projected \$531,000 in unidentified funds included in this plan based on past direction of the Board of Regents:

- **Access (pg. 2):**
 - Expand College Access Advisors
 - Assess systemwide tuition policies
 - Identify potential changes to state merit aid programs for higher education
 - Convene K-20 Summit on the transition from high school to college
- **Transfer/Completion (pg. 3):**
 - Establish Regents' Transfer Council
 - Develop a statewide framework for prior learning assessment
 - Increase transparency of credit transfer and articulation between institutions
 - **Increase equity in Concurrent Enrollment via general education and pathways**
- **Strategic Communications (pg. 5):**
 - Complete USHE rebrand and website redesign
 - Develop and implement statewide advocacy of higher education in partnership with USHE institutions
 - Transition StepUp online presence and programs to UtahFutures
 - Hold 50th anniversary commemoration event
 - Establish an updated attainment goal beyond 2020
- **Workforce (pg. 6):**
 - Enhance access to earnings and employment data for planning and prioritization
 - Deepen partnerships with Talent Ready Utah Board and other state workforce organizations

- Coordinate with institutional economic development leads
- **Cost/Operational Efficiency (pg. 7):**
 - Improve cost efficiency of IT activities and shared services
 - Review performance funding model for potential policy and legislative action
 - Develop Regents’ data strategy for long-term planning; standardize the flow of student data
- **Regents’ Policy and Audit Activities (pg. 8):**
 - R262: Enhance coordination of climate survey; expand training and Board oversight in accordance with SB 134 (2019)
 - R508: Work with institutions to review/update the current list of USHE peer institutions
 - R567: Prioritize two to three major audit activities to be performed by the Regents’ Risk Management Committee
 - R743: Revise the Regents’ state-funded capital development prioritization process in accordance with SB 102 (2019)
 - R805: Launch a systemwide women’s leadership mentor program
 - New: Establish a Regents’ policy to formalize high impact practices
 - New: Implement the Regents’ mental health recommendations via the Mental Health Advisory Committee
 - New: Develop a policy on conditional gifts to institutions

Access

Expand College Access Advisors

OCHE Lead: Spencer Jenkins

Primary deliverable(s): Access Advisors in 33 Utah high schools for the 2020-21 school year

Existing Budget	Unidentified funds	Outside funds
\$999,901		

The Board of Regents adopted the Utah College Access Advisors initiative as its keystone initiative in September 2018. The Board has a goal to establish a near-peer college access advisor in every Utah high school by Fall 2022. The first phase of this goal is expanding the existing program from 12 high schools to three new regions across the state in clusters anchored by Dixie State University, Utah Valley University, and Weber State University.

Assess systemwide tuition policies

OCHE Lead: Rich Amon

Primary deliverable: Analysis of USHE tuition/financial aid policies

Existing Budget	Unidentified funds	Outside funds
\$77,584		

The Kem C. Gardner Policy Institute will assess systemwide tuition and student aid policies, evaluate the net value of nonresident students, and consider metrics on affordability. This research will inform the Board of Regents as they consider potential policy modifications and enhancements.

Identify potential changes to state merit aid programs for higher education

Existing Budget	Unidentified funds	Outside funds
\$249,000		

OCHE Lead: Spencer Jenkins

Primary Deliverable(s): Implement current changes to Regents’/New Century Scholarships, identify policy and legislative strategies for 2020 legislative session

Engage with USHE financial aid leaders, K-12 leadership (the Utah State Board of Education, superintendents, legislators, and the Governor’s Office to develop a long-term strategy for state merit aid programs (Regents’ and New Century Scholarships). Coordinate multi-agency legislative support for any legislative action for the 2020 legislative session. Implement current operational adjustments resulting from HB 260 (2019).

Convene a K-20 Summit on the transition from high school to college

Existing Budget	Unidentified funds	Outside funds
	\$21,000	

OCHE Lead: Melanie Heath

Primary Deliverable(s): Establish annual event to marshal stakeholder support for Regents’ priorities related to students making the transition from high school to college

USHE participates in a myriad of activities pertaining to how high school students make the transition from high school to college. These activities include Concurrent Enrollment, Competency-based Education, the college access advisors, state scholarships, and more. This event will help the Board take a leading role in raising the visibility of high priority issues, and work with state stakeholders to develop both long-term strategies and immediate policy/legislative goals in concert with other leaders. It is anticipated this would be held in conjunction with the November Board of Regents meeting in advance of the 2020 legislative session. For 2019, this would be combined with the Board of Regents 50th anniversary dinner. Implementation depends on identifying the necessary funds.

Transfer/Completion

Establish Regents’ Transfer Council

Existing Budget	Unidentified funds	Outside funds
\$20,000		

OCHE Lead: Liz Hitch

Primary Deliverable(s): Establish a Regents’-led council and identify supporting policy to oversee systemwide transfer strategies

The council will oversee the assessment of the current state of transfer within the Utah System of Higher Education, implementation of a web-based statewide transfer tool, implementation of transfer-friendly articulation and pathway strategies through the long-standing majors meetings facilitated by the Commissioner’s Office, implementation of current statutory obligations (e.g. HB 45 and SB 91 from 2019), and identify future policy and legislative issues. Emerging models of postsecondary education like Prior Learning Assessment, Competency-based Education, micro-credentialing, etc., require a statewide framework that is based on data-driven policies and enables the seamless and informed transfer of credit.

Develop a statewide framework for prior learning assessment

OCHE Lead: Liz Hitch

Primary Deliverable(s): Statewide plan, timeline, and necessary policies for awarding credit earned through prior learning

In 2018, the Board of Regents began assessing existing policy intended to ensure the seamless and informed transfer of college credit, including credit earned through prior learning experience (PLE), also known as prior learning assessment (PLA). HB 45 (2019) buttresses those efforts by requiring the Board to establish a plan to facilitate seamless transfer of credit earned through PLA by November 2019. The plan must identify minimum standards for awarding credit, transcription, how PLA policies are communicated to students, training requirements, and technology tools. Statute also requires that by May 2020, institutions report the steps they will take to implement the statewide plan to the Board.

Increase transparency of credit transfer and articulation between institutions

OCHE lead: Liz Hitch

Primary Deliverable(s): Web tool that more clearly provides information on the transfer and articulation of college credit between USHE institutions

USHE has licensed a product since 2011 with basic functionality for transfer. In 2019, USHE seeks a more robust version of a transfer and articulation tool similar to what several other states have successfully adopted in recent years. This web-based, student-facing tool will streamline course credit equivalency and academic program articulation data from multiple-campus student-information systems into a single system. The tool will also enhance transparency as students gain greater access to information on credit transfer. Implementation depends on identifying the necessary funds.

Existing Budget	Unidentified funds	Outside funds
	\$350,000	

Increase equity in Concurrent Enrollment via general education and pathways

OCHE Lead: Liz Hitch

Primary deliverable(s): A long-term plan with policy and legislative changes to fund program growth and initiatives that promote timely completion of a 1-, 2-, or 4-year award and engage underserved populations.

Concurrent Enrollment Utah serves more than 36,000 students who earn upwards of 250,000 credit hours annually. Roughly half of the public high school graduating class takes at least one CE course. While CE benefits a growing number of Utah students each year, both academically and financially, there is evidence that the program does not serve all students equitably. Enrollment among low-income students and students of color does not mirror the composition of student populations in the high schools participating in the CE program. However, 50% of low-income students who take CE enroll in college, compared to 23% of low-income students who do not take a CE course.

Existing Budget	Unidentified funds	Outside funds
\$120,000		

Strategic Communications

Complete USHE rebrand and website redesign

OCHE lead: Melanie Heath

Primary Deliverable(s): Updated USHE brand with an accompanying website that better showcases the work of the Board of Regents

Existing Budget	Unidentified funds	Outside funds
\$27,000		

By creating a modern and updated brand and website, the Board of Regents will have the opportunity to build greater awareness of the benefits of higher education, the role and value-add of the Board of Regents, and the Board's statewide initiatives among stakeholders. This initiative was identified in 2018 as part of the Board's strategic communications objectives.

Develop and implement a statewide advocacy plan for higher education in partnership with USHE institutions

OCHE lead: Melanie Heath

Primary Deliverable(s): An ongoing, coordinated advocacy effort on the value of higher education

Existing Budget	Unidentified funds	Institution funds
	\$160,000	\$87,000

The perception of higher education, both nationally and statewide, has been on the decline in recent years, with a negative national dialogue around the value of higher education, student debt, "degrees to nowhere," and free speech on campus permeating into Utah. To tackle these issues head-on, to change the narrative for key audiences, and to lay the groundwork for better collaboration among institutional legislative representatives/communications directors in preparation for the 2020 rollout of a state attainment goal, the Commissioner's Office will work with USHE institutions on a collaborative strategy to advocate for higher education statewide. This includes the adoption of a common platform to coordinate localized messaging alongside institutional messaging. Coordinated messages include campus safety, the economic value of college, access to college, outcomes of graduates, etc. Implementation depends on identifying necessary funds.

Transition StepUp online and programs to Higher Education to UtahFutures

OCHE lead: Melanie Heath

Primary Deliverable(s): Transfer of online and printed K-12 outreach materials (StepUp to Higher Education) to UtahFutures

Existing Budget	Unidentified funds	Outside funds
\$185,000		

This transition gives Utahns a single platform for college and career information, simplifies the Utah postsecondary counseling and guidance landscape, focuses the communications resources of the Commissioner's Office, and avoids duplication of efforts with other state-level entities. This includes a transition of existing printed outreach materials and digital content, as well as statewide messaging on state aid programs and scholarships. StepUp to Higher Education activities (USHE Counselor Conference, Utah College Application Week, etc.) will continue in FY20. However, the constellation of outreach activities will be assessed for future success and viability for FY21 and beyond.

Hold 50th anniversary celebration

OCHE lead: Melanie Heath

Primary Deliverable(s): An evening event

commemorating the 50th anniversary of the Board of Regents (in conjunction with scheduled November Board meeting at K-20 Summit)

Existing Budget	Unidentified funds	Sponsorships
		\$75,000

The K-20 Summit will also include a dinner celebrating the 50th anniversary of the Board of Regents. The summit, including the dinner, will set the tone for the Board of Regents around several areas of focus, will celebrate the historic anniversary of the Board, and will help the Board show leadership for their efforts across state agencies. Current tentative dates: November 14-15. Implementation depends on identifying necessary funds.

Establish an updated attainment goal by 2020

OCHE lead: Carrie Mayne

Primary Deliverable(s): Long-term postsecondary goal to anchor statewide planning and messaging for postsecondary education

The Board of Regents established an attainment goal in 2011 and mandated several efforts in support of that goal (15-to-Finish, Completion, etc.). The Commissioner’s Office staff will work with the Board in developing a new attainment effort for launch in 2020.

Workforce

Enhance access to earnings and employment data for planning and prioritization

OCHE lead: Carrie Mayne

Primary Deliverable(s): Improved data reporting on the impact of postsecondary education in the economy

This effort will result in improved data that highlights USHE graduates’ earnings in the workforce and contributions to the regional, state, and national economy. Data will better communicate to students, parents, and high school counselors the personal return on investment that will result from increased degree attainment. The enhanced data system will provide a more comprehensive measure of success for USHE institutions in preparing students for the current workforce by capturing placements anywhere in the nation.

Deepen partnerships with Talent Ready Utah Board and other state workforce organizations

OCHE lead: Carrie Mayne

Primary Deliverable(s): Increased engagement on specific programs with Talent Ready Utah

Existing Budget	Unidentified funds	Outside funds
\$24,000		

Engage the Talent Ready Utah organization in the Governor’s Office of Economic Development by establishing a Promise Partner program with employer partners in conjunction with the Utah Access Promise Scholarship and establish ongoing support from industry to College Access Advisors.

Coordinate with institutional economic development leads

OCHE lead: Carrie Mayne

Primary Deliverable(s): More informed institutional economic development input to the Board

Establish a group of institutional economic leads similar to other consortia groups convened by Commissioner's staff (e.g., Business VPs, Financial Aid Directors, legislative representatives). These institutional economic development leads have not met together to date. Convening this group will provide greater insight into institutional economic development strategies and ways they can be supported and enhanced through systemwide collaboration.

Cost/Operational Efficiency

Improve cost efficiency of IT activities and shared services

OCHE lead: Rich Amon

Primary Deliverable(s): Increase USHE CIO engagement in pursuing cost-efficient shared services, clarify USHE CIO role in support of Commissioner's Office and Board

As the Commissioner's Office seeks potential efficiencies and cost savings across USHE institutions, the USHE CIO can be an important catalyst in identifying opportunities for leveraging IT resources. The Commissioner's Office does not have the skill set in-house to adequately vet IT-related requirements associated with key Board initiatives, such as a transfer credit articulation tool. A better-defined relationship between the Commissioner's Office and the system's CIO, along with improved engagement of the system CIO in implementing systemwide IT solutions where appropriate, should lead to significant operational savings to institutions and better systemwide functionality.

Review performance funding model for potential policy and legislative action

OCHE lead: Rich Amon

Primary Deliverable(s): In-depth training and discussion at August 1-2 Board meeting with the goal of identifying and advancing policy and legislative changes in the performance funding model

Provide Regents with a training session to review the performance-based funding formula and process. Review performance funding metrics and weights in relation to Regent strategic objectives. Identify potential policy and legislative changes necessary to improve the formula and process.

Develop Regents' data strategy for long-term planning; standardize the flow of student data

OCHE lead: Carrie Mayne

Primary Deliverable(s): Data standardization in anticipation of future integration of core student data systems as institutions migrate to new enterprise resource planning and student information systems.

Lack of data standardization across the institutions creates challenges for current USHE tasks such as measuring systemwide outcomes and tracking students across the system. As the core student data system at almost all USHE institutions faces its end of life, standardization will create a core from which student data can flow seamlessly across the institutions, allowing for more effective academic advising, statewide reporting, transfer student preparation, and workforce planning.

Regents' Policy and Audit

New Policy Activity:

- **R262 Student Safety:** Enhance coordination of climate survey, expand training and Board oversight in accordance with SB 134 (2019)
- **R508 Guidelines for Approving Lists of Comparable Institutions:** Work with institutions to review/update the current list of USHE peer institutions
- **R567 Internal Audit Program:** Prioritize two to three major audit activities to be performed via the Regents' Risk Management Committee
- **R743: Process for Requesting Use of Capital Funding:** Revise to Regents' state-funded capital development prioritization process in accordance with SB 102 (2019)
- **R805 Women and Minorities in Faculty and Administrative Positions:** Launch women's leadership mentor program
- **New:** Establish Regents' policy to formalize high impact practices
- **New:** Implement Regents' mental health recommendations and formally establish Mental Health Advisory Committee
- **New:** Develop policy on conditional gifts to institutions

Internal Audit:

In addition to completing several small audits required by Board of Regents policy and performing other duties, two to three medium- to large-scale audits involving institutions will be completed during 2019. These audits could include the following (each of these areas was cited as "high risk" either by two or more institutions or by the Commissioner's Office):

1. *Campus Security* (1,200 hours)
 - a. Evaluate institution policies and procedures regarding campus security with best practices.
 - b. Review institution protocols for incidents that threaten the safety of students, faculty, and/or staff.
2. *Course/Program Fees* (900 hours) – *in process*
 - a. Determine if institutions:
 - i. Adequately approve course, program, and other non-Regent approved fees.
 - ii. Use course, program, and other non-Regent approved fees for their designated purposes.
3. *Minors on Campus* (900 hours)
 - a. Determine if institutions:
 - i. Established adequate policies to address minors on campus.
 - ii. Follow policies and best practices to ensure the safety of minors on campus.

4. *R805, Women and Minorities in Faculty and Administrative Positions Compliance* (750 hours)
 - a. Determine if institutions:
 - i. Comply with state statute (including UCA 53B-2-106), Board of Regents policies (including R801 and R805), and best practices concerning women and minorities in faculty positions.
5. *Shared Services* (1,200 hours)
 - a. Identify potential areas of reduced overall costs through shared services.
 - b. Compare the level of shared services within USHE with those in similar systems.
 - c. Review the advantages and disadvantages of selected shared services.
6. *Selective Admissions* (750 hours)
 - a. Determine if programs with selective admissions:
 - i. Established adequate admissions criteria to fulfill the individual program's mission.
 - ii. Evaluate admissions applications in accordance with appropriate criteria.
 - iii. Admit students according to established criteria.
 - iv. Established adequate controls to prevent conflicts of interest.
7. *Postsecondary Admissions Baseline and Policy Analysis* (hours TBD)
 - a. Baseline analysis resulting in policy or legislative recommendations including projected cost impact to the Commissioner's Office and institutions to implement best practices and tools.