What’s the problem?: A new look at Utah’s Growing Opportunity Gap

• Postsecondary attainment gaps exist for underrepresented student populations
• By 2065, the percentage of people of color in Utah, ages 18-35, will nearly double

*If systemic and institutional structural barriers go unmitigated*…

• More students will miss out on post high school certificates and degrees
• Utah’s workforce and economy will be negatively impacted

Data Source: Kem C. Gardner Policy Institute, Race/Ethnicity Projections
Disparities within Utah’s College Enrollment Percentage Rates

Student of color enrollment rates are as much as 40% below that of white students.

Data Source: USHE College Participation & Completion Report, 2019
Disparities within Utah’s College Completion Percentage Rates

Student of color completion rates are as much as 35% below that of white students.

Data Source: USHE College Participation & Completion Report, 2019
Gender, race & postsecondary participation

- Male Native Americans (8.52%)
- Male Hispanics (8.72%)
- Male Hawaiian/Pacific Islanders (9.74%)
- Only female, Hawaiian/Pacific Islanders had a lower participation rate (8.48%).

Data Source: USHE College Participation and Completion Report, 2019
Regional, socioeconomic context: High school fall enrollments by school district

• Utah’s statewide average enrollment rate for students one year out of high school is 46%.
• Park City School District tops the list with 68% of students enrolling
• Rural and Urban school districts tend to exhibit lower-than-average fall enrollment rates (Uintah School District enrolls 30%, Ogden School District enrolls 34% of their senior class)

Data Source: USHE’s Utah High School Students Transition to College Report, 2020
What’s the solution?: Equity first

What do we mean by equity?
Inequality
Unequal access to opportunities

Equity
Custom tools that identify and address inequality

Equality?
Evenly distributed tools and assistance

Justice
Fixing the system to offer equal access to both tools and opportunities

Source:pixabay.com in the 2019 Design in Text Report

SHEEO & Lumina Foundation Equity First Presentation, August 2020
Board commitment to advance equitable systemic change

1. Establish a diversity, equity, and inclusion workgroup to cultivate collaboration and coordination among the Board and System leadership.

2. Create an equity lens framework for higher education leaders to better understand, identify, and address systemic equity issues as they establish priorities, set goals, revise System policies, and govern the Utah System of Higher Education.

3. By the November 20 Board meeting, each standing Board committee will develop a set of aligned priorities, specific to their assigned areas of responsibility, that are equity-driven, measurable, and focused on creating meaningful progress toward removing statewide inequities.
Finance & Facilities

• Affordability
• Student fees
• Performance funding
• Growth funding
• Shared services
• Financial transparency
• Tuition and fees processes
• Capital facility planning and prioritization
Student Affairs

• **Revise Regents’ Scholarship, coordinate all state aid programs**
  • Develop new criteria and awarding process to present to Commissioner for consideration of Board, per Board instruction
  • Work with Institutional Research in developing standard reporting on state aid programs

• **Campus safety**

• **Mental health**

• **UCAC Advisors and closing the Opportunity Gap**
Technical Education

• Seamless transfer and articulation
• Improve data collection, quality and outcomes
Academic/Degree-Granting Education

• Concurrent Enrollment
  • Support institutional CE programs in designing interventions based on the NACEP study on low-income student participation
  • Explore the possibility of financial assistance to support participation of low-income students in CE

• Seamless transfer and articulation
Contact Information

Laís K. Martinez
State Director of Equity and Advocacy, USHE
lmartinez@ushe.edu