



UTAH SYSTEM OF  
HIGHER EDUCATION

# MEMORANDUM

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October 30, 2020

## Board of Higher Education Innovation Taskforce

Over the past decade, several national institutions of higher education have made dramatic shifts in their approach to offering education options, particularly in the area of online education. For example, Western Governor's University, Arizona State University, and BYU Pathways have dramatically expanded reduced-cost online courses and degrees available to students throughout the country. But beyond offering online degrees, these organizations have embraced innovative instruction models, including competency-based education, prior learning assessments, and unbundled instruction responsibilities.

Institutions within the Utah System of Higher Education have long offered online programming options for their respective students, but they are often working independently, sometimes duplicating courses and programs, and recreating content and curriculum that already exists at other USHE institutions. And while USHE institutions have developed exceptional online offerings individually, there is remarkable opportunity for innovation at a system level, leveraging the expertise and resources of all 16 institutions together to provide a new model for online instruction and beyond.

Several institution presidents have approached the Commissioner's office with ideas and expressed an urgent need to begin collaborating to find innovative solutions for the future of higher education. The Board should create a task force of presidents, Commissioner's staff, and System experts to begin identifying opportunities and laying the groundwork for moving new initiatives forward.

### **Commissioner's Recommendations**

The Commissioner recommends the Board establish an innovation task force to begin exploring and developing systemwide innovations in online education and other areas of high potential.