

Equity in Opportunity & Resources Initiative

Proposal by President Kum, President Siaki, and President Corbett

Why Equity?

We live in a world, nation, and state where too often people are not treated fairly or justly. We see evidence of systemic barriers and the effect that they have on all types of communities, especially in the realm of higher education. We believe that as a USA Board representing all students in Utah, we have the capacity, and obligation to address these barriers, especially in regards racial/ethnic, socioeconomic, and health inequities.

Racial & Ethnic Equity

Statewide Goal: Declaring Racism a Public Health Crisis

Description: The goal would be to work with our state legislature to pass a joint resolution that would declare racism a public health crisis in Utah, similar to how last year's USA Board advocated for declaring Mental Health a public health crisis. In addition we are collaborating with UDMA to host a virtual town hall discussing our initiative & how we can implement these changes within the state of Utah, hopefully along with special guests who can speak on the importance of our initiative.

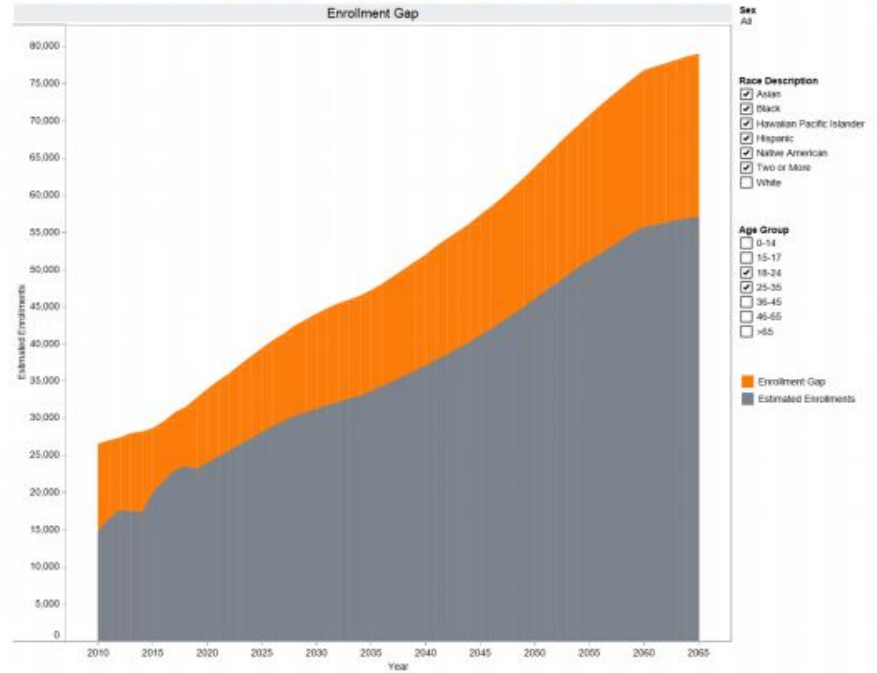
Rationale: Not only is there an existing path to success with declarations as paved by our predecessors, but there is even an existing resolution to help propel forward that was recently created by students at the University of Utah.

In addition, public health crisis declarations are crucial for elevating the conversation, and lead to special attention and increased resources being devoted.

Percent of state population (18-35) enrolled at a USHE institution, 2018

Race/Ethnicity	Ages 18-35		
	Female	Male	Total
White	14.56%	15.61%	15.09%
Hispanic	10.45%	8.72%	9.59%
Asian	13.43%	13.01%	13.22%
Black	14.57%	11.43%	13.00%
Hawaiian/Pacific Islander	8.48%	9.74%	9.11%
Native American	10.98%	8.52%	9.75%
Two or More	14.66%	14.87%	14.76%
Total Average	12.45%	11.70%	12.07%

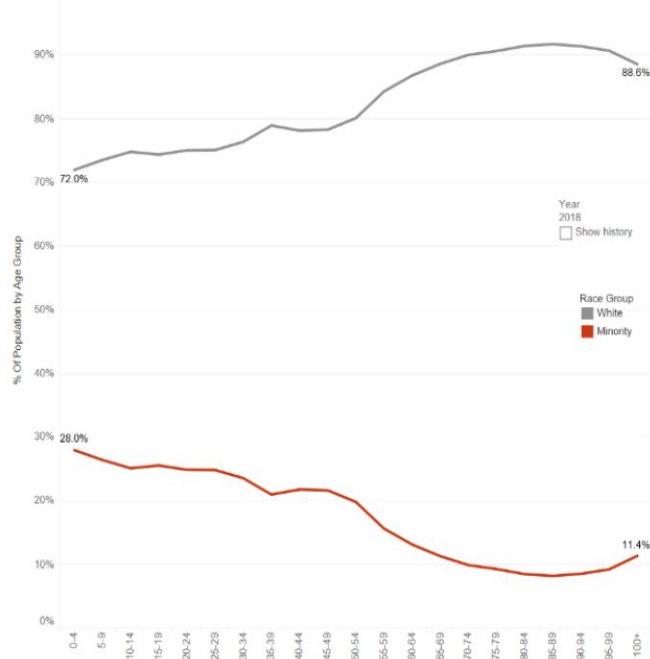
Estimated Enrollment Gap - Utah Population 18-35



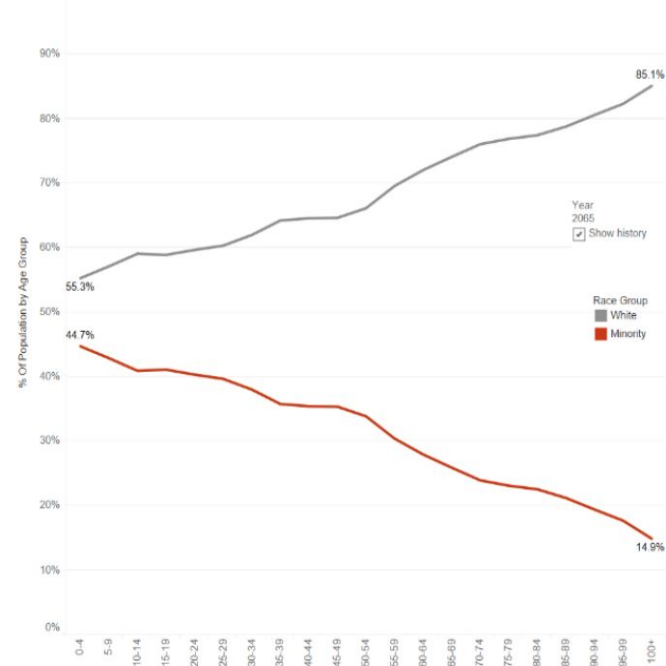
Population trends of Utahns ages 18-35



Racial Share of Population by Age Group



Racial Share of Population by Age Group



Institution Goals:

- *For schools who do not currently have one, let's get Diversity, Equity, & Inclusion Action Plans at all USA institutions.*
 - *These plans should and can include pieces such as plans for adjustments in hiring and retention of diverse faculty/staff, and establishing Anti-Racism Task Forces.*
- *Let us also explore ramping up our hate speech policies and lower our institutional tolerances for language that racist or discriminatory in nature*

Socioeconomic Equity

Statewide Goal: A Statewide Campaign on Financial Transparency & Resources

Description: The goal is to collaborate as a USA Board to address socioeconomic inequity by starting a statewide campaign, creating a directory for scholarships & other financial resources on the Utah Student Association Website. In addition, the plan is to develop, produce & distribute a series of videos/infographics explaining the student fee allocation process, as well as detailing where fees are being spent at each institution to address student concern.

Rationale: This promotes transparency and creates access to information in higher education throughout the state of Utah.

Institution Goals:

- *Collaborate to set standards for student food pantries at institutions throughout the state of Utah.*
- *Provide updates on CARES Act Higher Education Emergency Relief Funds to ensure students have the resources necessary to succeed academically online (Electronic materials, access to internet, etc.).*
- *Provide transportation for students to vote in upcoming elections, or work to allow institutions to become designated polling places.*
- *Develop free FAFSA & scholarship application workshops for students unfamiliar with these processes.*

Health

Equity

Statewide Goal: More Health Resources on USA Campuses











Description: The overarching goal of health equity will focus on securing funding for more health services on all USA campuses. Whether it be by way of legislation, endowment, or internal reallocation of funds within our respective institutions, we must continue prioritizing the mental and physical health of our students

Rationale: As the state has declared mental health a public health crisis already, we now have more grounds to demand that action be taken to give all students access to psychologists, psychiatrists, and crisis counselors. We also have found other physical health resources that could be implemented.

The American School Counselor Association recommends one counselor per 250 students. All of the universities and colleges participating in this board have a ratio of 1000+ to 1.

Want to see a college counselor? Get in line

National standards recommend that colleges have one therapist per 1,000 to 1,500 students available for counseling services. At Utah universities, the vast majority of schools do not meet that benchmark.

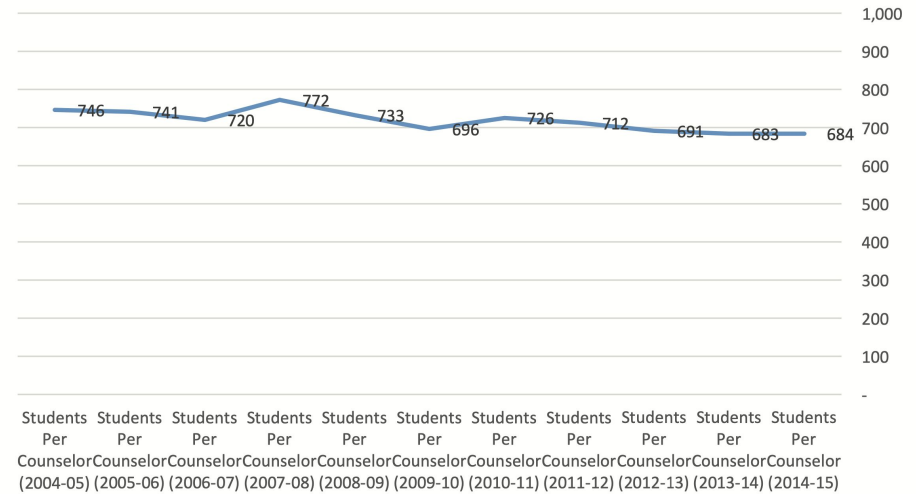
	Westminster College	BYU	Southern Utah Univ.	Snow College	Weber State	Utah State	Dixie State	Univ. of Utah	Utah Valley	Salt Lake CC
Number of counselors	3	29	7.5	2.5	9.25	7.5	4	12.25	7	3.25
Number of students*	2,800	33,000	9,300	3,500	18,600	16,000	8,993	32,000	35,000	30,000
1 counselor per number of students <small>(each student figure represents 100 students)</small>	 930	 1,000	 1,240	 1,400	 2,011	 2,133	 2,248	 2,617	 4,997	 9,200
Wait time	One day to a few weeks	three to four weeks fall/winter	About two weeks	15 days	One to three weeks	Three to four weeks (30% are referred out)	Usually 24 to 48 hours	8.9 days	Several weeks	Less than two weeks

Source: Tribune reporting

*Fall 2016 enrollment; Weber State and Snow College reflect smaller than full enrollment

GRAPHIC BY TODD ADAMS | The Salt Lake Tribune

Utah Student-to-Counselor Ratio, 2004-05 to 2014-15



Students Per Counselor (2004-05) to Students Per Counselor (2014-15)

Institution Goals:

- *Allocating student fee monies to health and wellness programs. If administration can't prioritize this funding, we as student leaders must.*
- *Working to create policies protecting students on study abroad trips and in off-campus housing from other students/faculty/staff in the case of sexual harassment. (As these are areas no longer protected by Title IX)*
- *Providing resource pamphlets with affordable community health resources (vaccinations, medications, physicals, counseling) for each geographic area our schools lie within.*
- *Having hard talks about mental health via webinars, campaigns, videos, town halls with administration, etc.*

Closing Remarks

It is so exciting being able to present our goals and aspirations for making our state a more equitable place for all students. With the emphasis that UBHE is putting on equity initiatives, we hope and believe that there is a lot of work that can be done together in this pursuit of addressing the inequities that our students and their communities face.

<https://www.schoolcounselor.org/asca/media/asca/Publications/ratioreport.pdf>

<https://www.sttrib.com/news/education/2017/03/07/struggling-students-forced-to-wait-as-utahs-public-colleges-dont-have-enough-therapists/>

https://ushe.edu/wp-content/uploads/pdf/reports/issue_brief/2020/2020_Aug_opportunity-gap-IB.pdf

Sources