



UTAH SYSTEM OF
HIGHER EDUCATION

MEMORANDUM

TAB C

March 26, 2021

Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion Board Workgroup Summary and Draft Resolution

At the direction of the Board, following the adoption of the [Resolution to Advance Equitable Systemic Change](#) at its August 2020 meeting, the Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion Board Workgroup was formed. The workgroup, co-chaired by Board members Lisa Michele Church and Shawn Newell, alongside Special Assistant to the Commissioner on EDI Laís Martinez, meets quarterly and is charged with fostering collaboration and coordination among the Board and System leadership, as well as with cultivating and integrating equity, diversity, and inclusion awareness, transparency, and progress throughout the Utah System of Higher Education.

Since its charter, the EDI Board Workgroup has fostered partnerships with state agencies such as the Utah Division of Multicultural Affairs to ensure cross-agency alignment in Board equity initiatives. The workgroup has also aligned with the Board's developing strategic plan to increase awareness of underrepresented and marginalized student, staff, and faculty experience. Such presentations and advocacy from institutional administrators have driven the upcoming Board resolution on behalf of Dreamers, undocumented, and DACA-eligible individuals.

The EDI Board workgroup is committed to advancing equitable systemic solutions to the full Board and will continue to explore innovative approaches to ensure all Board members have the opportunity to hear directly from USHE's college and university students, staff, and faculty to more equitably guide and inform their work.

Commissioner's Recommendation

The Commissioner recommends that the attached Resolution to Recognize the Positive Impact of Dreamers in the Utah System of Higher Education be sent to the Student Affairs Committee after Board discussion to fine-tune the resolution with institutional and state partners. The revised resolution will be presented to the Board again in its May meeting for adoption.

Attachment

*RESOLUTION TO RECOGNIZE THE POSITIVE IMPACT OF DREAMERS IN
THE UTAH SYSTEM OF HIGHER EDUCATION*

WHEREAS, the Utah Board of Higher Education recognizes that underrepresented students face intractable structural barriers as they work to access, persist, and complete higher education and that the Board must take bolder steps to serve underrepresented students in higher education; and

WHEREAS, the Utah Board of Higher Education will soon adopt a strategic plan which sets aggressive goals to improve access, completion, affordability, and workforce alignment in Utah's 16 higher education institutions for all Utahns, with a specific focus on closing the opportunity gap; and

WHEREAS, in 2012, the Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals (DACA) program was created to allow benefits to certain young undocumented students brought to the United States as children—commonly referred to as Dreamers—and has allowed more than 800,000 young people nationwide to attend school, work lawfully, and plan their lives without the constant threat of deportation; and

WHEREAS, Utah was one of the first of 19 states to pass laws allowing undocumented students to pay in-state tuition if they attended and graduated from the state's primary and secondary schools—10 years before federal policy; and

WHEREAS, Utah institutions of higher education want Dreamers, undocumented, and DACA-eligible individuals to attend college, and these institutions strive to provide the support needed to reach their educational endeavors; and

WHEREAS, nationally, there are 216,000 DACA-eligible students, and 87 percent of those students are enrolled in undergraduate programs, while 13 percent are enrolled in graduate-level programs; and

WHEREAS, in Utah, there are more than 10,000 DACA recipients who have come to live and work legally, yet only a fraction of those college-aged students are accessing higher education; and

WHEREAS, Dreamers informed members of the Board that they urgently need more educational support to ensure they are represented and to help them succeed on campus; and

WHEREAS, the Board is responsible to advocate for Dreamers, undocumented, and DACA-eligible individuals and support their efforts to access higher education in the State of Utah, thereby broadening and enriching the higher education experience of all;

THEREFORE, the Utah Board of Higher Education resolves to advance changes within the Utah System of Higher Education by asserting the following:

1. We welcome Dreamers, undocumented, and DACA-eligible individuals at all colleges and universities in Utah.
2. We embrace and celebrate the diverse cultures, backgrounds, and insights Dreamers, undocumented, and DACA-eligible individuals contribute, which elevate the experiences of all students, faculty, staff, and community. We must harness equity, diversity, and inclusion efforts across the System so that Dreamers, undocumented, and DACA-eligible students can persist and flourish.
3. We will collaborate with our colleges and universities and K-12 partners to expand dedicated resources and streamline processes, including but not limited to admissions and enrollment, that support Dreamers, undocumented, and DACA-eligible individuals.

Dated this 21st day of May 2021.

Harris H. Simmons, Chair
Utah Board of Higher Education



Dave R. Woolstenhulme
Commissioner of Higher Education