May 21, 2021

Utah Board of Higher Education Strategic Plan

Overview
The Utah Legislature established the Utah Board of Higher Education on July 1, 2020, as the governing board for higher education in Utah. The Board controls, manages, and supervises the Utah System of Higher Education, which is comprised of the 16 public colleges and universities in the state. The Board is tasked with establishing and promoting a state-level vision and goals for higher education and addressing quality; affordability; educational opportunity, access, equity, and completion; workforce alignment and preparation for high-quality jobs; and economic growth.

In 2020, Utah’s two higher education systems merged, creating a single system of 16 higher education institutions. The newly-created Utah Board of Higher Education embarked on a strategic planning process to guide the new System for the next five years. To develop the strategic plan, the Board and Office of the Commissioner of Higher Education engaged in a rigorous, collaborative, and creative process that built on past initiatives from previous boards and incorporated feedback from institutions, state leaders, students, and other stakeholders. Feedback groups have included/will include:

- Board of Higher Education committees
- Institutional boards of trustees leadership
- Council of Presidents
- Institutional consortia groups (Chief Academic Officers, Instructional Officers, Chief Diversity Officers, Chief Student Affairs Officers, Institutional Research Directors, Business Affairs Officers, etc.)
- Governor’s Office
- Utah State Board of Education staff
- Utah Student Association

This strategic plan will serve as the fundamental guiding charter for the work of the Board and System for the next five years. The strategic plan is guided by two main themes:

1. Alignment of measures between statewide postsecondary attainment goals and performance-based funding
2. Centering of educational equity and inclusion, so that higher education opportunities exist for all Utahns
Measuring Success
To track progress toward statewide attainment goals, the Utah Board of Higher Education aligned several disparate systemwide measures into a single cohesive measuring system. This includes alignment between the state's attainment goal, institutional performance measures, and the Board's five-year strategic plan.

10-year statewide attainment goals
The 10-year statewide attainment goals were set in 2020 by the Utah Higher Education Strategic Planning Commission. These statewide attainment goals align with the Board priorities of Access, Completion, and Workforce Alignment. The measures are linked: increasing success in access will call for more effort in timely completion; increasing success in completion will call for more effort in workforce alignment.

5-year strategic plan goals
The Board's five-year goals, outlined in this strategic plan, will serve as the midpoint measure toward the statewide ten-year attainment goals. The strategic plan includes goals for underrepresented population success within each priority. The goals are set at rates that address closing statewide equity attainment gaps.

Year-over-year institutional goals tied to performance funding
The Board's five-year strategic plan goals will guide institutions' goals for performance funding. The Commissioner's Office provided data to institutions showing their historical data for the attainment goal measures for subgoals. Institutions will work with their boards of trustees to set five-year and annual performance funding goals.

Centering equity
Utah's higher education landscape continues to see significant structural and systemic gaps reflected in postsecondary enrollment and completion rates when disaggregated by race, ethnicity, gender, and socioeconomic status. When comparing Utah college enrollment numbers of Utahns ages 18 to 35, enrollment rates of students of color are as much as 40% below that of white students. Similar gaps exist in the completion rates of students at USHE institutions: postsecondary attainment of students of color is as much as 35% below that of white students.

The Utah Board of Higher Education is committed to utilizing the newly-adopted equity lens framework to identify and address barriers to equity of opportunity for all Utahns. The equity lens framework begins with the shared belief that every student has the ability to learn, and with that understanding, the Board recognizes its position to ensure structural barriers are removed so that all students have access to equitable, safe, and conducive learning environments. To guide the Utah Board of Higher Education in its adoption of policies, initiatives, and strategies, the Board is committed to implementing the practical exercise of the equity lens framework to ensure all efforts are focused at closing attainment gaps for Utah students.
**Measuring for equity**

The strategic plan includes goals for underrepresented population success within each priority. The Board has a full definition of “underrepresented” in the [Equity Lens Framework](#): "Any student group that has traditionally held a smaller percentage of the total higher education population. For the purposes of this framework, these are student groups who are disproportionately represented in comparison to an equivalent counterpart." Subgoals within this strategic plan focusing on underrepresented students are aligned with currently available data, and are defined as those populations that are underrepresented within each of the following priorities:

- **Access**: low-income students and historically marginalized students of color: Black/African-American, Hispanic/Latinx, Pacific Islander, Native American, and students who identify as multiracial.
- **Completion**: historically marginalized students of color: Black/African-American, Hispanic/Latinx, Pacific Islander, Native American, and students who identify as multiracial.
- **Workforce Alignment**: women and the following student populations: Black/African-American, Hispanic/Latinx, Pacific Islander, Native American, Asian, and students who identify as multiracial.

By centering equity in the strategic plan, the Board is committed to question and disrupt how things have always been in order to reimagine a postsecondary education system that fosters equitable access and success, creates pathways for economic mobility, and work towards a high quality of life for each student and their communities.

**Next steps**

The Commissioner’s office will spend the summer developing project plans for each tactic identified in the strategic plan, as well as an implementation timeline for the next 12 months. The Commissioner’s office will present the first progress report on the strategic plan at the September 17, 2021, Board meeting. The progress reports will be updated monthly and will be available on ushe.edu.

**Commissioner’s Recommendation**

The Commissioner recommends that the Board adopts the draft strategic plan as its framework for the next five years, and directs his office to begin implementation of the strategic plan, as well as report back on progress of the strategic plan at each Board of Higher Education Committee of the Whole, starting on September 17, 2021.

**Attachment**
## SYSTEM UNIFICATION

### Develop, strengthen, and leverage a seamless and articulated system of higher education

#### Align programs with institutional roles and minimize duplication among institutions

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>DEGREE GRANTING</th>
<th>TECHNICAL</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Study current program offerings across degree granting institutions to ensure fit with institutional roles.</td>
<td>Study current program offerings across technical colleges to ensure fit with institutional role.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Explore tiered tuition structure tied to institutional roles.</td>
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#### Increase stackability of credentials from technical colleges to degree granting institutions

<table>
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<tr>
<td>Review policy governing award types across degree granting institutions to ensure policies are equity minded and supported by data and allow for stackability across all institutional types. Review policy R473, R401, R472 for articulation and transfer between technical colleges and degree granting institutions.</td>
<td>Review policy governing award types across technical colleges to ensure policies are equity minded and supported by data and allow for stackability across all institutional types. Review policy R473, R401, R472 for articulation and transfer between technical and degree granting institutions.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Develop standardized approach to understand number of students utilizing current articulations between tech colleges and degree-granting institutions.</td>
<td>Develop standardized approach to understand number of secondary students receiving credit for course work completed at the high school.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Explore potential for transitioning technical education from clock-hours to credit hours.</td>
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SYSTEM UNIFICATION

Develop, strengthen, and leverage a seamless and articulated system of higher education

(For discussion)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>BOARD’S ROLE</th>
<th>GOAL</th>
<th>STRATEGY</th>
<th>TACTIC</th>
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<tbody>
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<td></td>
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<td>PRIORITY</td>
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### SYSTEM UNIFICATION

#### Merge system policies and align data and measures, as appropriate

**DEGREE GRANTING**
- Review policies to ensure alignment between tech colleges and degree granting institutions. Regularly review system policies to ensure they are equity-focused.
- Align data and measurements between tech colleges and degree granting institutions, when appropriate.
- Explore tracking graduate placement in the workforce.

**TECHNICAL**
- Review policies to ensure alignment between tech colleges and degree granting institutions. Regularly review system policies to ensure they are equity-focused.
- Align data and measurements between tech colleges and degree granting institutions, when appropriate.
- Explore tracking graduate placement in the workforce.

#### Train boards of trustees on delegated responsibilities

**DEGREE GRANTING**
- Train boards of trustees on program approval process, tuition processes, equity, diversity, and inclusion, etc. Develop ongoing training for trustees.

**TECHNICAL**
- Train boards of trustees on program approval process, equity, diversity, and inclusion, etc. Develop ongoing training for trustees.

#### Streamline presidential evaluation and R&R processes.

**DEGREE GRANTING**
- Support presidents in meeting expectations of the Board, including incorporating equity, diversity, and inclusion in evaluations and R&R.

**TECHNICAL**
- Support presidents in meeting expectations of the Board, including incorporating equity, diversity, and inclusion in evaluations and R&R.
### ACCESS

Remove structural barriers to entry

Increase the college-going rate of high school graduates by 3% in 5 years.

Increase the college-going rate of underrepresented groups by 4% in 5 years.

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<tr>
<td>Ensure high school students are meaningfully informed on scholarships, dual enrollment programming, financial aid, and higher ed pathways</td>
<td>Fund statewide expansion of the Utah College Advising Corps (UCAC) to every high school in the state. Evaluate program data to determine efficacy and best practices.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Facilitate collaboration among college access partners such as UCAC, TRIO, GEAR UP, AVID, Latinos in Action, USHE CE Directors, CTE directors, institutions, and advisors.</td>
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<td>Partner with USBE on messaging and advising on advanced coursework options in K-12, including PRIME pilot implementation.</td>
<td>Partner with USBE on messaging and advising on TE/CTE coursework options in K-12, including PRIME pilot implementation.</td>
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<th>DEGREE GRANTING</th>
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<tr>
<td>Simplify institutional admissions processes</td>
<td>Consider a USHE common technical education admissions and scholarship application, and acceptance letter.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Connect institutions to high school student data to improve access, particularly for underrepresented student populations. Implement the Single Student Identifier systemwide.</td>
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Analyze available data to determine more inclusive future measures.
## ACCESS

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<tr>
<td>Increase the college-going rate of high school graduates by 3% in 5 years. Increase the college-going rate of underrepresented groups by 4% in 5 years.</td>
<td>Strengthen admissions advisors’/tech college staff’s capacity for addressing student basic needs</td>
<td>Support institutions in diversifying faculty and staff. Expand Utah’s pipeline of diverse K-12 educators</td>
</tr>
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<td>Provide additional training and resources for admissions officers to connect new students with health, transportation, housing, food, services for undocumented students, childcare, or technology for student success. Evaluate data on referrals and outcomes to determine efficacy.</td>
<td>Provide additional training and resources for technical college staff to connect new students with health, transportation, housing, food, services for undocumented students, childcare, or technology for student success. Evaluate data on referrals and outcomes to determine efficacy.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Facilitate collaboration between community partners and on campus services to identify resources for basic student needs; advocate for better community and campus resources supporting degree granting college students.</td>
<td>Collaborate with community and tech college staff to identify resources for student basic needs; advocate for better community resources supporting tech college students.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Review policy to support institutions in their efforts to attract and retain diverse faculty and staff. Facilitate collaboration on best equitable hiring and retention practices.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Partner with USBE to support efforts to diversify the K-12 educator workforce through TH Bell Scholarship funding and other collaborative efforts.</td>
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**AFFORDABILITY**

Remove structural barriers to affordability

Increase student ability to pay cost of attendance.

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<tr>
<td>Increase completion of the Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA).</td>
<td>Develop an expanded standard of affordability by the end of 2021.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**DEGREE GRANTING**

- Data analysis (demographics data). Study what other states are doing (audit).
- Explore FAFSA requirement for state and degree granting institutional scholarships.
- Research creation of a simplified, pre-FAFSA form to indicate if participants may qualify for financial aid before filling out the full FAFSA.
- Partner with USBE to increase FAFSA completion for high school seniors.

**TECHNICAL**

- Data analysis (demographics data). Study what other states are doing (audit).
- Explore FAFSA requirement for state and tech college scholarships.
- Research creation of a simplified, pre-FAFSA form to indicate if participants may qualify for financial aid before filling out the full FAFSA.
- Partner with USBE to increase FAFSA completion for high school seniors.

**Evaluate and prioritize state student financial aid**

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<tr>
<td>Review policy, statute, and procedures on waivers. Identify how waivers are being used at each institution. Identify all aid opportunities. Develop policy and implement of new scholarship programs (Adult Learner Grant Program and Opportunity Scholarship)</td>
<td>Develop policy of new scholarship programs.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**DEGREE GRANTING**

- Advocate for state scholarship support for undocumented students. Streamline statewide HB-144 affidavit process. Benchmark student participation in affidavits.

**TECHNICAL**

- Advocate for state scholarship support for undocumented students.

**Build and maintain legislative support**

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<thead>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Leverage Concurrent Enrollment for high school students to reduce student cost</td>
<td>Leverage free tech ed tuition for high school students to reduce student cost</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**DEGREE GRANTING**

- Advocate for full legislative funding of compensation.

**TECHNICAL**

- Advocate for full legislative funding of compensation.
Develop a cost structure model to compare the cost of delivering degrees and awards for each USHE institution by the end of 2021.

<table>
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<td>Ensure institutional cost of attendance remains within the standard of affordability year over year.</td>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Study shared services in the System. Board reviews recommendations from the study.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Create implementation plan for shared services. Create policy to have cost savings realized from shared services used for student aid.</td>
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**COMPLETION**

**Remove structural barriers to graduation**

- Increase timely completion of degrees and awards by 3% in 5 years.
- Increase the timely completion of underrepresented students by 4% in 5 years.

**Structure awards to facilitate completion and transfer**

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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Update policy to structure certificate to associate to bachelor’s pathways, appropriate to discipline.</td>
<td>Identify programs that have the potential for pathway agreements.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Conduct transfer study to determine barriers to transfer.</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Facilitate coordination among academic disciplines to align program structure to support transfer and completion, as appropriate.</td>
<td>Facilitate coordination among programs to align program structure to support transfer, wherever possible.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Update Policy R470 to embed equity, diversity, and inclusion in General Education essential learning outcomes.</td>
<td>Embed equity, diversity, and inclusion in foundational training requirements.</td>
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**Increase awarding of credit for prior learning**

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<tr>
<td>Implement Policy R472, including institutional PLA reporting.</td>
<td>Adjust policy to define reporting for credit for prior learning in the documentation of alternate documentation and competency-demonstration. Benchmark and set goals to increase the awarding of credit for prior learning.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Update the Utah Transfer Guide to include transfer pathways from tech ed to degree granting, and include statewide standardized credit for examinations (AP, IB, CLEP, DSST) in the Utah Transfer Guide.</td>
<td>Update the Utah Transfer Guide to include articulations from high school to technical colleges.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
### COMPLETION

Remove structural barriers to graduation

Increase timely completion of degrees and awards by 3% in 5 years.
Increase the timely completion of underrepresented students by 4% in 5 years.

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| *Ensure systemwide institutional supports for student mental health and campus safety*
| Continue partnering with JED Campus at degree-granting institutions. Receive recommendations after completion of institution assessments. | Implement JED Campus at technical colleges. Receive recommendations after completion of institutional assessments. |
| Analyze Cicero campus safety study to determine next steps from a degree-granting institution perspective. | Analyze Cicero campus safety study to determine next steps on campus safety from a technical college perspective. |
| Develop baseline expectations for mental health/campus safety for degree-granting institutions. Support institutions in meeting baseline expectations. Facilitate collaboration on best practices. | Develop baseline expectations for mental health/campus safety for technical colleges. Support institutions in meeting baseline expectations. Facilitate collaboration on best practices. |

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<tr>
<td>Expand supportive entry level education practices</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Refine policy to develop standards for placement, supportive instruction, corequisite remediation, and other models to support student entry into and success in introductory academic college-level coursework.</td>
<td>Refine policy for supportive instruction offerings for students unable to meet minimum admission requirements, and implement corequisite and other models to support student entry into technical programs.</td>
</tr>
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</table>
## WORKFORCE ALIGNMENT

Increase availability and stackability of high-demand, high-wage programs

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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Collaborate with stakeholders (DWS, USBE, UCAC, UDOC) to support enrollment of adult learners in academic education.</td>
<td>Collaborate with stakeholders (DWS, USBE, UCAC, UDOC) to support the enrollment of adult learners in technical education.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Increase adult learner awareness of scholarships and other aid for degrees via Keys to Success.</td>
<td>Increase adult learner awareness of scholarships and other aid for certificates via Keys to Success.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Increase completion rate of graduates in high-demand, high-wage programs by 7% in 5 years. Increase completion rate of underrepresented groups in programs aligned with high-wage, high-demand jobs by 8% in 5 years.

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<tr>
<td>Align existing resources (Programs &amp; Majors Guide, Transfer Guide, etc) to Keys to Success. Engage with stakeholders (DWS, UCAC, USBE, institutions) to ensure Keys is a one-stop for all postsecondary resources.</td>
<td>Ensure technical education program information, articulation of secondary course work, and opportunities for educational, career, and wage progression are represented in the Programs and Majors Guide, Transfer Guide, and Keys to Success.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Advocate for statewide marketing campaign. Focus on the unique needs of adult learners (program flexibility, prior learning, funding, etc).</td>
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## WORKFORCE ALIGNMENT

### Increase availability and stackability of high-demand, high-wage programs

- **Increase student participation in work-based learning**
  - **DEGREE GRANTING**
    - Refine policy to define the role of work-based learning in academic education.
    - Develop systemwide tracking mechanism for reporting progress in participation of work-based learning activities.
    - Collaborate with stakeholders (DWS, GOED, USBE) to connect work-based learning opportunities to high-demand pathways to degrees
  - **TECHNICAL**
    - Refine policy to define the role of work-based learning in technical education.
    - Develop systemwide practices for reporting progress in the development of and participation in work-based learning activities.
    - Collaborate with stakeholders (DWS, USBE, GOED) to connect work-based learning opportunities to high-demand pathways to certificates

### Increase completion rate of graduates in high-demand, high-wage programs by 7% in 5 years.

- **DEGREE GRANTING**
  - **TECHNICAL**
    - Engage employers to strengthen the connection between degrees and employment options.
    - Refine program approval process to increase transparency of program alignment with verifiable workforce needs.
    - Refine policy to ensure workforce training is equity-minded, supported by data, and reflect institutional roles.

### Increase completion rate of underrepresented groups in programs aligned with high-wage, high-demand jobs by 8% in 5 years.

- **DEGREE GRANTING**
  - **TECHNICAL**
    - Engage employers to strengthen the connection between certificates and employment options.
    - Review policy governing enrollment and classification of adult students enrolled in training for the purpose of maintaining or advancing their employment.

### Increase participation in training (reskilling/upskilling) leading to wage and employment progression

- **DEGREE GRANTING**
  - **TECHNICAL**
    - Engage employers to strengthen the connection between degrees and employment options.
1) Collaborative Start: Assess (Executive Staff)

Purpose:
- Develop a collective, high-level understanding of what success looks like for each tactic
- Identify project developers

2) Collaborative Development: Examine Data, Engage & Plan (Project Developers)

Purpose:
- Develop more specific milestones and timeline for next 12 months
- Determine office resources needed
- Feed the implementation timeline
**COMPLETION**

| Structure awards to facilitate completion and transfer
| Conduct transfer study to determine learners to transfer to.
| Facilitate coordination among academic disciplines to align program structure to support transfer and completion, as appropriate.
| Transition coordination among programs to align program structure to support transfer, wherever possible.
| Transforming financial aid.

| Impact of policy reforms
| Assess impact of policy reforms.
| Transforming financial aid.

| Implementation strategies for financial aid
| Implement policy reforms.
| Strengthen financial aid.

| Initial results and implications
| Assess initial results.
| Strengthen financial aid.

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| Strengthen financial aid.

| Initial results and implications
| Assess initial results.
| Strengthen financial aid.
- Tactic project plans will create the OCHE “guidebook”
- Static document
- If something in the project plan changes, we will collectively come together to determine next steps
• Implementation timeline will be created from the “guidebook”
• Implementation timeline will be used as a framework for developing Board agendas for the next year
Progress report will be created from the implementation timeline
- Red light/green light
- Progress report will be updated monthly
- Available on ushe.edu
Timeline

- Summer – Tactic development
- Aug. 1 – Finalize tactic project plans
- Aug. 15 – Develop implementation timeline
- Sept. 16 Board meeting – Provide first progress report