August 20, 2021

Strategic Plan Update: Assigning Strategies to Specific Board Committees

In 2020, Utah’s two higher education systems merged, creating a single system of 16 higher education institutions. The Utah Board of Higher Education adopted a comprehensive strategic plan in May 2021 to guide the newly-merged 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 built on previous boards’ past initiatives and incorporated feedback from institutions, state leaders, students, and other stakeholders. The Board’s strategic plan focuses on six key priorities:

- System Unification
- Completion
- Access
- Workforce Alignment
- Affordability
- Research

Two main themes guide the strategic plan:
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

Strategies to Board Committees
The Commissioner’s office has assigned strategies from the strategic plan to specific Board committees. This does not mean a specific strategy will not impact other committees, but that an identified committee will keep an eye on its assigned strategies’ progress and actively work to shepherd the strategies along. (A note: The Academic Education and Technical Education Committees share all of their strategies, as they impact both degree-granting and technical institutions.)

Progress on the Strategic Plan Thus Far
The Commissioner’s office is 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 2021 Board meeting. The progress reports will be updated monthly and available on www.ushe.edu.

The Commissioner’s office will present a draft of the Research priority of the strategic plan (added at the May 2021 Board meeting) to the Academic Education Committee in August for discussion. A final draft will be presented to the Board for consideration in September.

Commissioner's Recommendation
This is an information item only; no action is required.

Attachment
**System Unification**
- Develop, strengthen, and leverage a seamless and articulated system of higher education.

**Access**
- Remove structural barriers to entry.
- Increase the college-going rate of high school grads by 3% in 5 years.
- Increase the college-going rate of underrepresented groups by 4% in 5 years.

**Affordability**
- Remove structural barriers to affordability.
- Increase student ability to pay cost of attendance.
- Develop an expanded standard of affordability by the end of 2021.

**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.

**Workforce Alignment**
- Increase availability and stackability of high-demand, high-wage programs.
- 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.

**Priority**
- Develop, strengthen, and leverage a seamless and articulated system of higher education.

**Board’s Role**
- Align programs with institutional roles and minimize duplication among institutions.
- Train boards of trustees on delegated responsibilities.
- Merge System policies and align data and measures, as appropriate.
- Increase stackability of credentials from technical colleges to degree-granting institutions.
- Streamline presidential evaluation and R&R processes.

**Goal**
- Increase the college-going rate of high school grads by 3% in 5 years.
- Increase the college-going rate of underrepresented groups by 4% in 5 years.

**Strategy**
- Ensure high school students are meaningfully informed on scholarships, dual-enrollment programming, financial aid, and higher ed pathways.
- Support institutions in diversifying faculty and staff. Expand Utah’s pipeline of diverse K-12 educators.
- Simplify institutional admissions processes.
- Strengthen admissions advisors’/tech college staff’s capacity for addressing student basic needs.
- Build and maintain legislative support.
- Develop and prioritize state student financial aid.
- Develop a cost structure model to compare the cost of delivering degrees and awards for each USHE institute by the end of 2021.
- Establish supportive entry-level education practices.
- Ensure students are meaningfully informed on the value and ROI of higher ed.
- Increase FAFSA completion.
- Increase awarding of credit for prior learning.
- Supportive systemswide institutional supports for student mental health and campus safety.
- Ensure higher ed participation rate of adults with/without a high school diploma.

**Legend**
- Academic Education/Technical Education
- Student Affairs
- Finance & Facilities
- Executive Committee