



September 17, 2021

Academic Education Committee Report

The Academic Education Committee met on August 20, 2021, under the leadership of Committee Chair Arthur Newel, with all committee members in attendance.

Agenda Items

The meeting began with a welcome for Tanner Marcum, the new student Board member.

Action items for the meeting were related to the committee's responsibility for oversight of academic program offerings and faculty work, as reflected in the Board's strategic plan.

1. Nina Barnes provided an update on the work over the summer of the Board Transfer Council and its recommendations for three action items, which the committee voted to forward to the full Board for approval as listed in the recommendations below [see also the memo on Transfer Recommendations]. Those recommendations are to reconstitute the Board Transfer Council to reflect changes in Board membership and at institutions; to fully implement the use of the State Student Identifiers to facilitate research on data within the Utah System of Higher Education (USHE); and to ask the Psychology Faculty Majors Committee to design the first systemwide associate-to-bachelor degree direct transfer pathway as a pilot that will inform how those pathways may be implemented on a larger scale in the top transfer majors.
2. Chair Newel gave a short overview of the Board's strategic plan and went over the priorities assigned to the Academic Education Committee. The committee also discussed a draft of a research priority to be added to the strategic plan, took feedback on the draft from institutional presidents and chief academic officers, particularly that it should reflect the role of research at all of the degree-granting institutions, and is forwarding the updated draft to the Committee of the Whole for inclusion on the strategic plan.

The committee also had a follow-up conversation on one of its strategic plan assignments: to help institutions in their efforts to diversify faculty and staff. At the June meeting, the committee asked Associate Commissioner Hartley to work with chief academic officers to prioritize tactics to aid in recruiting and retaining diverse faculty. She presented the results of conversations from multiple

meetings and a Qualtrics survey of chief academic officers, faculty senate leaders, and some presidents and chief diversity officers. The five recommendations were to:

- Update policies related to faculty and their work
- Assess the state of diversity on campuses through quantitative and qualitative data, use that information to set goals, and track progress toward those goals
- Create opportunities for systemwide collaboration for faculty
- Provide strategic mentoring/recruiting of students interested in faculty careers
- Share best practices for faculty recruitment, hiring, and retention across institutions

The committee requested these recommendations next be incorporated into a tactic development plan for discussion at the October meeting.

Recommendations

The committee recommends that the full Board:

1. Prioritize the full implementation at all USHE institutions of the use of the Utah State Board of Education-issued State Student Identifiers, such that all students can be tracked as they move between institutions.
2. Ask the Psychology Faculty Major Committee to begin the first systemwide direct transfer pathway pilot for associate degrees into bachelor's degrees.
3. Approve the new membership of the Board Transfer Council.
4. Add the draft of a research priority to the Board's strategic plan.



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Technical Education Committee Report

During its meeting on April 22, 2021, the Technical Education Committee held discussions on the following topics:

Strategic Plan Committee Assignments

An overview was provided of strategic plan strategies assigned to the Technical Education Committee.

Items to be Reported to the Technical Education Committee

The Commissioner's Office informed the committee of the data and reports that will be presented to the committee including:

- The October report showing student enrollment and outcomes
- Year-end secondary data including enrollment, membership hours (credits attempted), and graduation rate
- Year-end postsecondary data including enrollment membership hours (credits attempted), short-term training, and graduation and placement rates
- Updates on strategic plan initiatives with data relating to:
 - Program alignment effort and implementation; ongoing reports of new/modified/discontinued programs; programs offered by institution(s)
 - Programs that include work-based activities, participating students, goals, and increases
 - Secondary articulation agreements, acceptance of credit for alternate documentation, and credit for prior learning (competency demonstration), goals, and increases
- Industry Advisory Council
- High demand classified programs
- Custom Fit
- Workforce development programs

There was a request for the committee to get more detailed information on student job placement.

Industry Advisory Council Update

Chair Simmons invited 13 individuals who have agreed to participate in the council: eight from key industry sectors, six key stakeholders, a tech college faculty member, and a degree-granting member.

The purpose of the council is to review and provide industry perspective and identify any talent gaps. The council will also inform the Board's Technical Education Committee, the Academic Education Committee, and the Board of Higher Education of their perspectives on these issues. They will meet twice yearly.

The committee suggested the system put a few questions out to the group before the meeting to spark discussion and noted that it is important that their perspective is objective and not influenced by any bias.

There was a question about how the system will connect the work of the advisory council versus the occupational advisory committees at the tech colleges. The Commissioner said the system would work on communication between the groups.

Credit Implementation Update

An implementation schedule has been drafted. Colleges will submit clock-hour to credit-hour conversion applications required by the technical college accrediting body to the Commissioner's Office for the first designated group of programs by September 1. Programs transitioned to credit will come before the Board for approval in September, then be submitted to the accrediting agency for approval. There will be at least three rounds of applications.

The implementation for SLCC will differ from the tech colleges because they are degree-granting and accredited by Northwest. Therefore, the Commissioner's Office will work with them separately.

Utah Programs and Majors Update

Technical education information has been entered in the programs and majors guide. This resource provides information on programs and degrees offered by all 16 higher education institutions. Anyone can enter an occupation of interest and search to learn more about the institutions offering the program, including links to the institution web pages. Board members were encouraged to explore UtahMajors.org.

Program Alignment Update and Discussion

In June, the committee decided that the program alignment initiative would include alignment of overall program graduation requirements with the minimum alignment of 70% of courses within each program. Programs can designate electives to provide flexibility in meeting any unique local industry needs.

The committee recommended that while the Commissioner's Office should retain an inventory of electives, there shouldn't be an expectation to align any similar elective courses.

The committee recommended that because outcomes of regulated programs (those with licensure, accreditation, or other third-party validation) are already aligned, the system should prioritize these programs in the alignment effort. The overall consistency of content and outcomes in these programs should simplify the effort.

The system may want to attempt to align remaining programs at the program level this year and course-level next year, although any group able to progress toward the goal should not be held back.

There was engaging discussion on this topic. The committee suggested there needs to be a balance between flexibility and transferability. If there is too much flexibility in the alignment in each program, the programs aren't really aligned or consistent between institutions, which could impact transferability. The committee agreed the minimum of 70% alignment provides an appropriate balance.

Overview of Technical College Secondary Articulation Agreements

In 2020, technical colleges served over 32,000 secondary students, 31% of the total student population. Many secondary students who enroll in technical college programs have already completed some Career and Technical Education course work at their high school.

Honoring these agreements by awarding credit reduces duplication of coursework and saves the students time, money, and increases completion rates.

Last year, about 300 high school courses were represented in articulation agreements, allowing students to receive credit for 333 unique technical college courses.

The committee discussed challenges with accessibility and visibility to counselors, students, and parents; awarding credit equitably, consistently, and proactively; the desire to receive reports on the amount of transfer credit awarded, and for institutions to set goals to increase the award of transfer credit. There are several strategic initiatives in place to address these issues.

Work with the Utah Hospital Association

The Utah Hospital Association approached the system to discuss student diversity pipeline issues in their industry. Challenges were discussed between the Commissioner's Office and the hospital association including equity, diversity, and inclusion initiatives, hiring and keeping medical professionals, and capacity problems in education programs. A group convened in July to dig deeper and will continue to search for opportunities to address the challenges for both parties.

Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion (EDI) Activity Summary

A summary was given of EDI activity over the last year including important conversations and actions like embedding the equity framework into the strategic plan. There was discussion about opportunities to enhance equity efforts going forward.

The Commissioner's Office is in the process of hiring a new legal counsel who will do an anti-racist, equity-focused policy review. This will be tied to the strategic plan over the next few years.

The Commissioner's Office is also partnering with the University of Utah's New Leadership Academy curriculum to support efforts to build Board and system leadership capacity on equity, diversity, and inclusion.



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Student Affairs Committee Report

The following is a summary report of the [Student Affairs Committee meeting on August 20, 2021](#).

1. Mental Health Funding Request (**Strategy: Ensure systemwide institutional supports for student mental health and campus safety**)

The Commissioner's Office, in consultation with USHE institutions student affairs leaders, the Huntsman Mental Health Institute (HMHI) and The JED Foundation proposed a [two-part legislative funding request](#) for the upcoming 2022 Legislative Session. Dr. Mark Rapaport, executive director of the newly-established Huntsman Mental Health Institute shared introductory comments about HMHI's revised statewide mission that includes an explicit focus on 18-24 year old students. The two-part proposal requests funding for peer mentoring/counseling at all USHE institutions and expansion of a pilot to establish after-hours mobile crisis response/prevention teams at UU, USU and SUU. The committee adopted the recommendation to advance the proposal to the full board with two qualifiers:

- 1) The services provide the needed coverage for technical schools.
- 2) The mobile health crisis team integrates existing private and campus services, include success measures that show how needs of underrepresented students are being met, and demonstrate collaboration with key stakeholder groups on campus (e.g. Centers for Student Wellness, Dream Centers, LGBT Resource Centers, EDI Councils).

2. Statewide Training for Campus Law Enforcement (**Strategy: Ensure systemwide institutional supports for student mental health and campus safety**)

The committee [received a summary of feedback](#) from volunteer reviewers of the anti-bias and de-escalation training being considered by USHE institutions public safety leaders. The committee gave a qualified recommendation of the trainings, contingent on the development of additional in-person training. This recommendation will be further considered at upcoming Student Affairs Committee meetings before advancing to the full Board for consideration.

3. Campus Safety and Equity Commission (**Strategy: Ensure systemwide institutional supports for student mental health and campus safety**)

Tanner Marcum, student Board member, shared the scope of the commission; the commission is expected to report at every Student Affairs Committee. Board member Marcum continues to engage with commission members and will share a draft charter with the full Board in anticipation of Board policy formalizing the commission in the near future.

4. Utah Student Association Update (**Strategy: Ensure students are meaningfully informed on the value and ROI of higher ed**)

Board member Marcum reported the Utah Student Association has identified the following priorities for the 2021-22 academic year:

- 1) Free menstrual products
- 2) Adoption of [Lauren's Promise](#)

- 3) FAFSA improvements
- 4) Standardize use of appropriate pronouns

5. Equity Practices in Admissions Processes **(Strategy: Simplify institutional admissions processes)**

Follow-up discussion from June 2021 committee. The admissions process continues to be a key focus of access to postsecondary education. Commissioner Woolstenhulme noted the USHE Audit Committee prioritized an audit of admissions fees, timeline TBD. There are many underlying questions behind some views that “it’s not broken, why fix it?” Several recent reports highlight the barrier to students trying to navigate the admissions and financial aid processes. Efforts also include automated electronic high school transcript services and integration with the Utah College Access Advisors.

Upcoming Agenda Items:

- Discuss recent legislation requiring K-12 to examine state funding that enables weighting for at-risk students, English language learners, etc. ([SB142](#))
- Updates and policy considerations on Campus Safety and Equity Commission
- Student presentation on admissions and financial aid barriers
- Update on Utah College Advising Corp expansion, including demographics
- Presentation on the economics around using child care vouchers at all schools, including technical colleges