UTAH SYSTEM OF HIGHER EDUCATION

October 29, 2021

Strategic Plan Update: Board Committee Priority Review

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 strategic plan in May 2021 to guide the newly-merged system for the next five years. The Board's strategic plan is built on six pillars:

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

Two 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

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 be keeping an eye on the progress of its assigned strategies and actively work to advance them. (The Academic Education and Technical Education Committees share all of their strategies, as they impact both degree-granting and technical institutions.)

Strategic Goals pertaining to the Student Affairs Committee:

- **Access:** 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.
- **Affordability:** Increase student ability to pay the cost of attendance.
- **Completion:** 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 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.

Strategies, Tactics, and Objectives of the Student Affairs Committee

	Strategy	Tactic(s)	Objectives
Access	Ensure high school students are meaningfully informed on scholarships, dual enrollment programming, financial aid, and higher ed pathways	• Facilitate collaboration among college access partners such as UCAC, TRIO, GEAR UP, AVID, Latinos in Action, USHE CE Directors, CTE directors, institutions, and advisors.	• Develop and package communications and training around USHE college access efforts • Relationship building and inventorying at the state level with state college access partners and institutional partners • Develop and implement strategy across UCAC coordinators and institutional partners that supports co-collaborative work in regions
	Simplify institutional admissions processes	• Build out K-12/USHE data to inform access	• Restructure partnership with Utah Date Research Center • Develop a process for more inclusive measures • Implement Statewide Student Identifier • Taskforce with institution partners and state stakeholders focused on ROI analysis of transactional data system • Longitudinal data for HS Feedback Report and other metrics
		• Simplify applications and admissions for students from historically underserved populations	• Expand the functionality of Keys to Success to integrate with institution admissions/enrollment platforms and processes • Update USHE residency policy and practices • Identify state policy/statute revisions to simplify admissions • Simplify state access and college readiness platforms
	Ensure systemwide institutional supports for student basic needs	• Help institutions establish a "standard of care" around basic needs, specifically technology, transportation, food, housing, childcare	• Landscape analysis of institutional basic needs supports • Train admissions and access personnel on state and institutional basic needs support
Affordability	Increase FAFSA completion	• Identify external partners that support increased FAFSA completion. Develop a statewide FAFSA completion strategy that focuses on specific student populations (military veterans, returning LDS missionaries, individuals from underserved communities, etc.).	• Review FAFSA Study and best practices • Study impacts of requiring FAFSA completion to receive institution scholarships • Develop alternative FAFSA for ineligible Title IV students • Align internal FAFSA initiatives • Align external FAFSA initiatives
		• Data research of FAFSA trends, study other states' strategies	• Complete gathering and analyzing Utah-specific FAFSA application data to gain insights into Utah's FAFSA completion rates, including the impact on LDS mission participation • Review and compile best practices that substantially increase FAFSA completion in other states • Establish ongoing data tracking to assess policy effectiveness • Create policy proposals based on data insights and best practices research
	Evaluate and prioritize state student financial aid	• Implement, evaluate, and prioritize state scholarships	• Implement updated state scholarships portal • Streamline state financial aid program administration and reporting • Clarify messaging on priority scholarships • Update state scholarship policies • Standardize financial aid award procedures

	Evaluate and prioritize state student financial aid (continued)	• Streamline citizenship affidavit processes (HB 144)	• Create one standard USHE sponsored HB-144 affidavit with accompanying instructions for awarding in-state tuition for all degree-granting institutions • Create instructional one-pager for institutions collecting citizenship data and awarding state and private scholarship aid • Review and update all policies to align with the revised statute • Create guidelines for institutions to annually report HB-144 enrollment and completion data
Completion	Ensure systemwide institutional supports for student mental health and campus safety	• Identify and implement system mental health strategies and policies in accordance with institution mental health strategic plans	• Expand JED partnership to Technical Colleges • Partner with Huntsman Mental Health Institute • Develop innovative workforce certifications in behavioral health in conjunction with Utah HHS • Peer mentoring for all USHE students • Increase SafeUT utilization • Student health insurance availability for mental health services • Coordinate confidential mental health histories • Document roles/intersects with public and private providers
		• Develop baseline expectations for campus safety for degree-granting /technical institutions. Support institutions in meeting baseline expectations. Facilitate collaboration on best practices.	• Campus Safety and Equity Advisory Council • Implicit bias training of campus law enforcement • Explore system partnerships with McCluskey Center • Review of policies and best practices of system interventions for campus safety
Workforce Alignment	Increase higher ed participation rate of adults with/without a high school diploma	• Collaborate with stakeholders (DWS, USBE, UDOC) to support enrollment of adult learners in academic /technical education.	• Define the segmentation of groups within the category of adults with/without a high school diploma using the results from the Cicero Adult Education survey and other resources to determine messaging and connectivity through state stakeholders • Partner with USBE to assess how USHE can achieve increased higher ed participation rate of adults without a high school diploma or equivalent. Study adult education outcomes and determine recommendations • Partner with DWS to assess the success of entry points of DWS clients into the USHE system
	Ensure students are meaningfully informed on the value and ROI of higher ed	• Secure funding for 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.	• Secure funding for statewide expansion of the Utah College Advising Corps (UCAC) • Determine best models for rural/remote advising through pilot programming • Develop an overall data strategy for program effectiveness: IR/FAFSA/UCAC data/Keys to Success • Aligning resources/training/materials with UCAC expansion

The Commissioner's office developed initial project plans for each tactic identified in the strategic plan and objectives for the ensuing 12-18 month timeline. The Commissioner's office presented the first progress report on the strategic plan at the September 2021 Board meeting. Progress reports will be updated monthly and available on www.ushe.edu.

Committee Discussion

The Student Affairs Committee is asked to review strategies and tactics to prioritize and verify efforts are moving in the right direction.

Commissioner's Recommendation

This is a discussion item only; no action is required.

PRIORITY	SYSTEM UNIFICATION	ACCESS	AFFORDABILITY	COMPLETION	WORKFORCE ALIGNMENT	RESEARCH
BOARD'S ROLE	Develop, strengthen and leverage a seamless and articulated system of higher education	Remove structural barriers to entry	Remove structural barriers to affordability	Remove structural barriers to graduation	Increase availability and stackability of high-demand, high-wage programs	Advocate for the role of research and support funding for research
GOAL	Develop, strengthen, and leverage a seamless and articulated system of higher education.	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.	Increase student ability to pay cost of attendance. Ensure institutional cost of attendance remains within the standard of affordability year over year.	Increase timely completion of degrees and awards by 3% in 5 years. Increase the timely completion of underrepresented students by 4% in 5 years.	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.	*TBD*

STRATEGY

- 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
- Streamline presidential evaluation and R&R processes
- Increase stackability of credentials from technical colleges to degree granting institutions
- Ensure high school students are meaningfully informed on scholarships, dual enrollment programming, financial aid, and higher ed pathways
- Simplify institutional admissions processes
- Ensure systemwide institutional supports for student basic needs
- Support institutions and USBE in diversifying the pipeline of P-20 educators, faculty, and staff
- Develop an expanded standard of affordability
- Increase FAFSA completion
- Evaluate and prioritize state student financial aid
- Expand shared services
- Develop a cost structure model to compare the cost of delivering degrees and awards for each USHE institution
- Structure awards to facilitate completion and transfer
- Increase awarding of credit for prior learning
- Ensure systemwide institutional supports for student mental health and campus safety
- Expand supportive entry level education practices
- Increase higher ed participation rate of adults with/without a high school diploma
- Ensure students are meaningfully informed on the value and ROI of higher ed
- Increase student participation in work-based learning
- Advocate for the role of research at degree-granting institutions in innovation, technology transfer, economic development/workforce, and community engagement and impact
- Ensure institutions have needed support to conduct research

LEGEND:
- Academic Education/Technical Education
- Student Affairs
- Finance & Facilities
- Executive Committee
- Academic Education only