



UTAH SYSTEM OF
HIGHER EDUCATION

MEMORANDUM

TAB A

February 18, 2022

Technical Education Committee Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion Efforts

The Utah Board of Higher Education adopted a comprehensive strategic plan in May 2021 to guide the system for the next five years. The Board's strategic plan focuses on six key priorities:

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

The strategic plan metrics align with statewide postsecondary attainment goals and performance-based funding and centers on educational equity and inclusion, to ensure higher education opportunities are accessible for all Utahns.

Information about how each priority, goal, strategy, and tactic addresses equity, diversity, and inclusion through meaningful student outcomes in the attached table. The committee will discuss the projected benefits and opportunities the initiatives provide to students.

Each board committee has primary responsibility for overseeing progress of designated strategies and tactics on the plan. Progress on the plan is available at: <https://ushe.edu/board/strategic-plan/>

Commissioner's Recommendation

This is an information item only; no action is required.

Attachment

Technical Education Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion Efforts

System Unification			
<i>Develop, strengthen, and leverage a seamless and articulated system of higher education.</i>			
Strategy	Align programs with institutional roles and minimize duplication among institutions.	Increase stackability of credentials from technical colleges to degree-granting institutions.	Merge system policies and align data and measures, as appropriate.
Tactic(s)	Study current program offerings across technical colleges to ensure fit with institutional role.	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. Develop a standardized approach to understand the number of secondary students receiving credit for course work completed at the high school. Explore potential for transitioning technical education from clock-hours to credit hours.	Review policies to ensure alignment between technical colleges and degree-granting institutions. Regularly review system policies to ensure they are equity-focused. Align data and measurements between technical colleges and degree-granting institutions, when appropriate.
EDI	The system merge resulted in the definition of institution roles and the need to inventory and align training with those designated roles. While budgetary and facilities efficiencies are gained through this effort, the outcomes will help ensure students who enroll in technical education training do so at an affordable tuition rate; duplication of training as students participate in pathways that extend between institutions is reduced or eliminated (saving students time and tuition dollars); and institutions focus effort in areas that are collaborative rather than competitive. (<i>Addresses: affordability, time to completion</i>)	Reducing or eliminating the duplication of technical education coursework included in pathway agreements helps to ensure students who enroll in technical education training do so at an affordable tuition rate . Pathways should reflect stackable coursework that ensures students build onto existing knowledge and skills at each educational level, rather than duplicating (in time and tuition dollars) the coursework that has already been completed. (<i>Addresses: affordability, time to completion</i>)	
Access			
<i>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.</i>			
Strategy	Support institutions in diversifying faculty and staff. Expand Utah’s pipeline of diverse K-12 educators.		
Tactics	Review policy to support all USHE institutions in their efforts to attract and retain diverse faculty and staff. Facilitate collaboration on best equitable hiring and retention practices.		
EDI	Equitable hiring practices reaffirm a school’s commitment to diversity by addressing employment barriers and		

	<p>providing equal opportunities for applicants from underrepresented populations.</p> <p>Diversity in faculty, staff, and administration enables students to see people who look like them, sound like them, and have similar life experiences, helping them feel a part of the learning community, which improves outcomes.</p> <p>Diverse staffing also sends a message to students about the level of opportunity available in their own future.</p> <p>Technical education is intended to simulate and prepare students for the workforce. Diversity in the learning environment prepares students to work in environments that are racially and ethnically diverse.</p> <p><i>(Addresses: Faculty, staff, and administrative diversity)</i></p>		
Completion			
<i>Increase timely completion of degrees and awards by 3% in 5 years. Increase the timely completion of underrepresented students by 4% in 5 years.</i>			
Strategy	Structure awards to facilitate completion and transfer.	Increase awarding of credit for prior learning.	Expand supportive entry-level education practices.
Tactics	Conduct transfer study to determine barriers to transfer. Facilitate coordination among programs to align program structure to support transfer, wherever possible.	Implement annual institutional reporting of credit for prior learning, proactive communications to students, and training of faculty and staff and assess the impact of credit for prior learning on student completion. Ensure standardization in awarding credit for prior learning and the transferability of credit for prior learning.	Refine policy for supportive instruction offerings for students unable to meet minimum admission requirements, and implement corequisite and other models to support student entry in and success into technical programs.
EDI	<p>The study should evaluate equitable access to transfer information and opportunities, processes for students to receive credit for prior learning and/or work experience (saving time and tuition dollars), and guidance provided to all graduates on transferring to degree-granting institutions. Plans should be developed to address barriers that have been identified.</p> <p><i>(Addresses: Equitable transfer opportunities, tuition savings, time to completion, educational growth)</i></p>	<p>While the majority of transfer students entering technical education are current high school students or recent graduates, technical education serves many students with some college but no degree and students with degrees. Students, parents, and high school counselors should be equitably informed of articulated high school courses that apply to technical college programs. Processes for the award of credit for prior learning should be transparent and equitable for both high school and adult students. Acceptance of prior learning and work experience reduces tuition dollars and time to completion. Benchmarks should be recorded and institutions should establish goals to expand the award of credit for prior learning and/or work experience.</p> <p><i>(Addresses: Equitable access to credit for</i></p>	<p>Many technical education programs require that students meet minimum admission requirements. Requirements are often put in place with the intent to enroll students who have the academic ability to be successful in the program. Technical colleges, specifically, are accountable for meeting minimum benchmarks for completion defined by the accrediting body. Some colleges refer students who fail to meet minimum admission requirements to developmental courses. Some allow students to begin the program while working on the required knowledge as a proving ground. Some colleges provide tutoring services to address</p>

		<i>prior learning and work experience, tuition savings, time to completion)</i>	academic deficiencies impacting student success. Providing academic support services contributes to student retention, higher levels of completion, and student ability to be successful in educational growth. <i>(Addresses: Barriers to academic success)</i>
Workforce Alignment			
<i>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.</i>			
Strategy	Increase student participation in work-based learning.		
Tactics	Consider policy to define systemwide practices for participation and reporting of work-based learning activities. Develop systemwide practices for participation in work-based learning activities.		
EDI	Many technical education programs include work-based activities in the form of externships or clinicals. Many students who participate in work-based activities secure employment opportunities with the sponsoring agency. While most regulated technical education programs require that every student participate in work-based activities, activities are often elective in other programs. Students who participate in work-based experience gain valuable work experience that increases employability. Given the opportunities and value of job placement for technical education, expansion of the availability of work-based activities and student participation are the goals of this initiative. <i>(Addresses: Equitable participation in work-based activities, increased employability, and expanded placement opportunities.)</i>		