UTAH SYSTEM OF HIGHER EDUCATION

March 25, 2022

Academic Education Committee Report

The Academic Education Committee met on February 18, 2022, under the leadership of Committee Chair Arthur Newell.

Action Items

1. The committee addressed one action item, a proposed revision to SUU's Faculty Workload Policy (SUU Policy #6.27), and it is forwarding the policy to the full Board for consideration and approval.

Discussion Items

1. Vice Chair Nina Barnes provided the committee with an update on the most recent work of the Board Transfer Council. The council has also met once subsequent to the February committee meeting. Key actions stemming from the council's work are the development of a systemwide direct transfer lower-division degree requirement agreements in 18 majors.

2. Associate Commissioner Julie Hartley gave a short overview of the Board's strategic plan and the status of priorities assigned to the Academic Education Committee. https://ushe.edu/board/strategic-plan/

3. Board member Tanner Marcum reminded committee members of the Utah Conference on Undergraduate Research, scheduled in-person and livestreaming on February 25 at Dixie State University. He noted the importance of undergraduate student research to the generation of new knowledge and to help students gain applicable skills for their future careers. He encouraged Board support for students' research and the conferences that allow them to share it.

4. The committee reserved the bulk of the meeting for a follow-up discussion of the January Board conversation with representatives from Silicon Slopes. It invited faculty and administrators from programs mentioned by Silicon Slopes participants to share more detailed information about their programs. Those invitees represented Utah Valley University's Computer Science and Information Systems & Technology Departments and its College of Engineering and Technology;

the School of Business at SLCC; and the University of Utah's School of Computing, School of Business, Department of Entertainment Arts Engineering, and Lassonde Studios. Representatives from all degree-granting institutions also participated in the conversation.

Key takeaways were:

- Embed digital literacy across the curriculum, including the ability to carefully evaluate sources of information along with training in the use of key software tools pertinent to particular disciplines.
- Encourage student participation in applied research, capstone projects, and other high impact practices that provide them with first hand-experience with the type of work they will do in their careers; explore partnerships with industry to provide paid internships; and create assessments of prior learning for workplace experiences pertinent to students' majors. These types of work-based and applied projects can occur during multiple points within a degree program.
- Help students reflect their skills and projects in resumes, electronic portfolios, and other formats such as GitHub, as appropriate to their disciplines and career pathways.
- Ensure ongoing updates to general education programs such as the work currently underway by the General Education Task Force, to reflect essential 21st century skills such as analytic thinking and innovation; active learning strategies; complex problem solving; critical thinking and analysis; creativity, originality, and initiative; leadership and social influence; technology use, monitoring, and control; technology design and programming; resilience, stress tolerance, and flexibility; reasoning, problem solving, and ideation.
- Participants also recognized the importance of university technology research programs for generating new tools and sparking new businesses and industries and noted the need for both applied and research programs in a well-rounded system of higher education.

Recommendations

This is information only; no action required.

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Technical Education Committee Report

During its meeting on February 18, 2022, the Technical Education Committee held discussions on the following topics:

Ogden Weber Technical Partnership

President Taggart discussed the Ogden-Weber Technical College partnership with Ogden City School District. Data shows that if a high school student has access to Career and Technical Education (CTE) during high school, they are more likely to graduate, go on to post-secondary education, and complete on time. Working with Ogden School District over the last five years, they've had a strategic plan initiative to increase their on-time high school graduation completion rate. Those students coming to Ogden-Weber Technical College are more likely to graduate on time, and those completing a certificate while in high school are 99% likely to graduate on time. Ogden School District requested to send even more students to the technical college. There were challenges with transportation; students were losing 1.5 hours out of their day in travel. Ogden-Weber Technical College acquired a building and five acres of land. Ogden City School District approached Ogden-Weber Technical College, proposing to spend $5M to remodel the building where students can attend high school and the technical college to complete their requirements for high school and a technical certificate in one location.

Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion (EDI) Efforts

A few of the institutions gave updates on their EDI efforts and shared some of their best practices. A couple of the presidents suggested to the committee that students in poverty, disabled students, and previously incarcerated students be included in the underserved groups.

Credit Transition Update

The institutions will submit the last of their fourth round of clock-hour to credit-hour applications as required by the accrediting body for every program. They are due March 1 and will be presented to the Board in March 2022. Once approved, they will be submitted to the accrediting body for approval with a sample publication from each institution. The implementation period begins July 1. Although institutions are required to implement within 180 days, the body has granted the ability to apply for an extension if needed.

Tooele and Bridgerland are not participating in the transition at this time. They both have accreditation reaffirmations this fall which means the institutions go into an accreditation moratorium where no changes can be made. They will be on hold until they complete their reaffirmations, and then they will begin the transition initiative.

- Financial Aid: The task force met with representatives from the U.S. Department of Education to understand what would be required for this transition. The task force is studying department rules and working with financial aid directors to clarify guidance.
- Student Services: Kim Ziebarth met with technical education student services officers to answer questions and the NorthStar team to discuss software development needs. Critical features will be available July 1.
- Tuition & Fees: USHE has a new hire that will be working on required changes to tuition and fees.

Program Alignment Update

The program alignment orientation for faculty selected to represent each program has been broken down into seven groups. The remaining six groups have had their initial meeting, and several program committees are progressing towards their goals faster than the timeline allows.

There will be about 60-70 unique programs, with 23 offered by only one institution and about half of the total being regulated by a third party.

Information from these groups will be brought to instructional officers and, once approved, will be brought to the Board. Once the Board approves, we will bring it back to the institutions so that the work can begin.

Salt Lake Community College (SLCC) Update

Jennifer Saunders highlighted some of the work being done at SLCC. The School of Applied Technology at SLCC is moving towards branding itself at Salt Lake Technical College. The new college will retain its close relationship with the School of Technical Specialties.

SLCC is currently working towards transitioning the first year of numerous credit/degree programs to technical education, resulting in more internal articulation agreements. The Institutional Pathways Initiative compliments and complicates system-level work, but they are working through these as statewide curriculum alignment work moves forward.

Phased transition work includes some programs from workforce development/continuing education as well as first year of CTE degrees to Technical Education. Institutional work, in addition to system-level program alignment work, is well underway. Having a technical college within a degree-granting institution has dynamics that include: Faculty shared leadership model, faculty tenure, academic freedom

discourse, curricular review and approval processes, accreditation – Northwest Commission on Colleges and Universities (NWCCU), and different student management systems.

Secondary Articulation Agreements

Secondary student enrollment makes up 31% of the total student population. Many secondary students who enroll in technical college programs have already completed some CTE coursework at their high school.

The acceptance of this course work begins with developing articulation agreements and looking for equivalencies. Honoring these agreements by awarding high school credit for completed coursework saves students time, expediting their path to completion, increasing completion rates, and saving tuition dollars.

Each year, instructional officers from each institution work with faculty to develop articulation agreements. Faculty review courses defined by the Utah State Board of Education to determine equivalency. The articulation agreements have been updated with 300 transferable courses, and were provided to the committee as part of the meeting materials.

Technical Education Scholarship Policy

The committee discussed the Technical Education Scholarship policy and the proposed changes made to the policy to reflect statutory provisions provided in SB136. Part of these policy changes included the formula for funding distribution, which calculates each institution's share of last year's FTE in technical education programs modified with the previous three years of funding. The institutions can also ask for additional funding in the annual budget request process. The statute also calls for the Board to consult with the Department of Workforce Services and then designate programs that prepare for occupations with high employer demand and high wages or have significant industry importance, as "high demand" programs for scholarship eligibility.

The committee would like to designate the following as "high demand" programs for Technical College Scholarship eligibility:
- All technical education programs leading to four- and five-star jobs, as identified by USHE Institutional Research for performance-funding goals; and
- Other technical education programs with significant industry importance shall be submitted by institutions and approved by the Board.

The committee voted to move this item to the full Board for approval.

Industry Advisory Council Update

Industry Advisory Council was set up after the merge of technical college and degree-granting institutions as required by statute. In October, the seven industries participated in the first meeting to discuss

workforce issues. They were asked to talk about USHE's strategic plan and how their efforts fit with USHE's. A broad discussion ensued, including the below topics:

- Workforce Scarcity: Difficulty finding talent that is needed within different specialties, getting students and employees in the door
- Awareness: How do we help parents and students become aware of occupations important to industry?
- Workforce Demand and Conditions: How do we handle work-based learning?
- Career and Education Pathways: How do we integrate things across industries and between levels of professions?
- Supporting Industry: How do we support industries?
- Challenges for Education
- Responsiveness/Innovation
- Industry Advisory Council Role

Debrief Silicon Slopes Workforce/Talent Solutions

In January, Talent Ready Utah arranged for a panel of representatives from the technology sector to talk to the Board of Higher Education about industry challenges, and opportunities as the private sector connect to and works with higher education students and faculty.

The committee discussed key takeaways and was concerned with the gap between what students are learning and the knowledge of industry on the quality that our institutions provide. The main issues discussed were:

- Education and industry working in parallel on this issue but are not working together.
- Industry is unaware of what we do and what we offer.
- How can we get internships alongside certificates?

Mountainland Technical College shared that they have hired some industry professionals to team teach with their instructors. This has helped keep the information current and also helped industry see what the students were learning and working on. Many students have been hired before they finished their program. This may not be possible in areas where there are not a lot of local industry professionals.

Recommendations

This is information only; no action required.

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Student Affairs Committee Report

The following is a summary of the Student Affairs Committee meeting on February 18, 2022:

Food Insecurity on USHE Campuses (TAB A)

The committee heard an update on results from the food security survey, which was done through a partnership with the Weber State University Center for Community Engaged Learning and the Center for Health Outcomes and Population Equity (HOPE) at the University of Utah Huntsman Cancer Institute. Key takeaways:

- 39% of USHE students are food insecure, with 21% experiencing very low food security.
- Latinx students are more likely to be food insecure (49%).
- Rural students were more likely to report food insecurity (44.5%) compared to urban students (37%).
- Technical college students are more likely to report food insecurity (47%) than degree-seeking students (38%).
- Over half of food-insecure students skipped a meal or went hungry if they did not have enough food.

Alex Cragun with Utahns Against Hunger presented findings from the Student Pantry Workgroup as well as advocacy options spanning federal, state, and institutional supports. Institutions attending the committee meeting shared existing strategies to tackle food insecurity, such as food pantries, food gleaning, addressing food waste, and community vouchers.

Period Products in USHE Institutions (TAB B)

Student body presidents from DSU, USU, SUU, and others read a letter addressed to the Board requesting that period products be provided free-of-charge at all higher education institutions. Several institutional presidents and senior staff were present at the meeting and indicated they were already offering free period products or were in the process of doing so.

Utah College Advising Corps (UCAC) Expansion Update (TAB C)

Tanner Telford, UCAC regional coordinator, and Mackenzie Ahanonu, UCAC adviser from East High School, joined the committee to share their experience on the ground with the program. Below is progress on the UCAC expansion thus far:

Start: 2020-21	**Phase I: 2021-22**	**Phase II: 2022-23**
1 regional coordinator overseeing	6 regional coordinators overseeing	6 regional coordinators overseeing
13 advisers serving	48 advisers serving	60 advisers serving
13 high schools in	**51** high schools in	**86** high schools in
5 school districts	21 school districts	35 school districts

The UCAC program set the following program-wide goals for high schools with a college access adviser:

1. FAFSA Completion: **43%** will complete the FAFSA, an overall increase of 5%
2. College Applications: **77%** will submit at least one college application
3. 1:1 Meetings: **73%** will have a 1:1 meeting with an access adviser
4. Family Engagement: **30%** of parents and families will have a meaningful interaction with an access adviser
5. FAFSA Assistance: **42%** will receive assistance and support with the FAFSA completion process

As of January 31, 2022, UCAC is over halfway to meeting the above program goals for the school year.

Title IX Coordination and Collaboration (TAB D)

Alison Adams-Perlac, associate general counsel, provided an update on systemwide Title IX coordination:

- USHE and the Title IX coordinators currently meet monthly, and the Title IX coordinators have been sharing ideas through that meeting about how USHE can best support their work.
- USHE created a shared communication channel and a form bank to allow Title IX coordinators to share forms, templates, and communications.
- USHE is also working to connect with Utah's law schools to explore pathways for law students to complete internships in Title IX offices across the state to help support the investigation, process advising, and decision-making roles. Initial meetings between USHE and Utah law schools are scheduled for March 2022. Additionally, USHE is working to ensure that job openings in these offices are advertised to students whose professional interests align with this work.
- USHE is also researching training options and exploring ideas related to institutions partnering for increased training and investigation support.

Campus Safety and Equity Advisory Council (CSEAC) (TAB E)

Board members Marcum and Serawop discussed student feedback from the February 18, 2022, CSEAC meeting, which included a discussion on institutional communication and support around student financial aid. More detailed feedback is attached.

Since its creation in 2021, the Campus Safety and Equity Advisory Council (CSEAC) has served as a student-led advisory group on important topics related to campus safety and equity within Utah's public higher education system. Council members are awarded a $1,000 stipend for the semester of their service.

Resolution to Affirm and Support USHE's LGBTQ+ Community ([TAB F](#))

Board Member Marcum and Peter Moosman, coordinator of Salt Lake Community College's Gender & Sexuality Student Resource Center, presented the proposed Resolution to Affirm and Support USHE's LGBTQ+ Community. The resolution directs the Commissioner's office to work with institutions in creating benchmarks of best practice and guidelines to better support LGBTQ+ student success.

> **ACTION**: The Student Affairs Committee approved the draft resolution to be forwarded to the full Board for consideration.
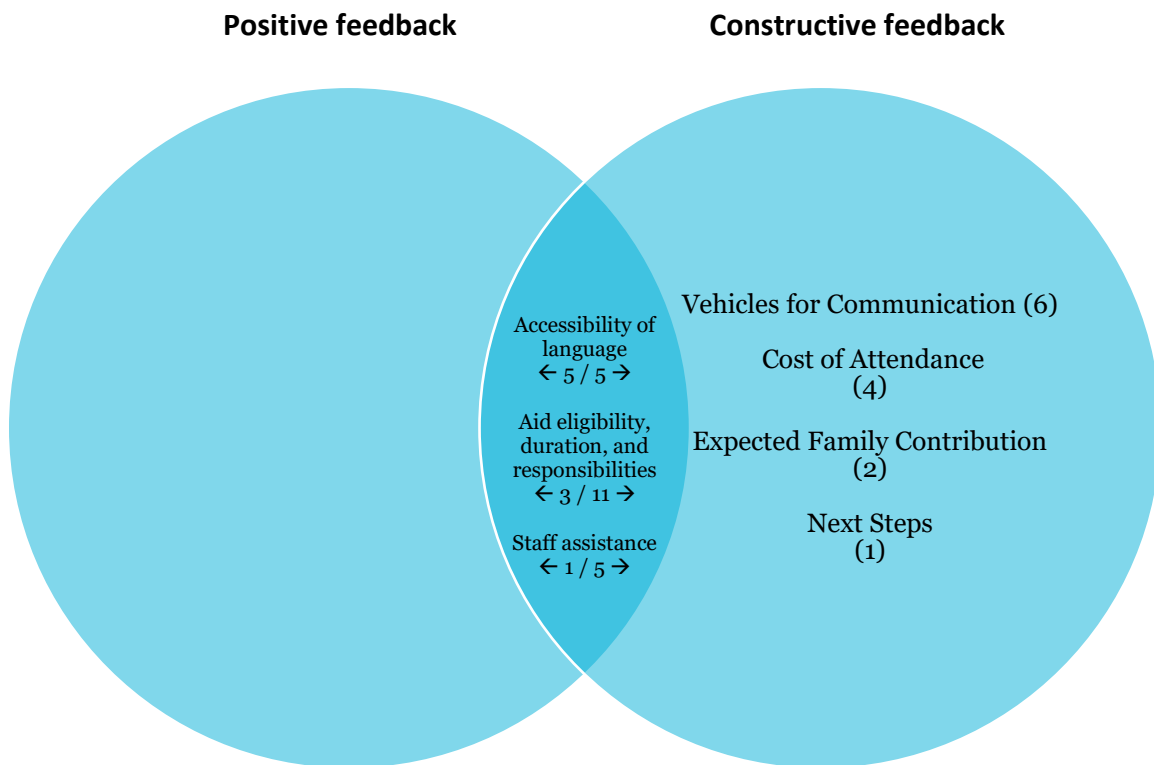
Attachment

Campus Safety and Equity Advisory Council (CSEAC) – Student Feedback on Financial Aid Equity and Institutional Financial Aid Messaging and Support

Overview

CSEAC met on February 18, 2022, and had a robust discussion on financial aid equity and institutional financial aid messaging and support. Prior to the meeting, council members were asked to reflect on their own experience, review their financial aid award letter in advance, and come prepared for a discussion including topics such as institutional communications on financial aid awards, clarity or lack of clarity about types of aid offered and expectations around that aid, and understandings around subsequent actions needed to accept/decline financial aid.

Feedback

Categories and examples of feedback are outlined in the table below, with the number of students who gave that feedback in parenthesis. Overall feedback is summarized below:

Positive feedback   **Constructive feedback**

Accessibility of language
← 5 / 5 →

Aid eligibility, duration, and responsibilities
← 3 / 11 →

Staff assistance
← 1 / 5 →

Vehicles for Communication (6)

Cost of Attendance (4)

Expected Family Contribution (2)

Next Steps (1)

Positive feedback	
Category	*Examples*
Accessibility of language (5)	My financial aid award letter made sense (5)
Aid eligibility, duration, and responsibilities (3)	I understand what I had to do to keep my scholarship/financial aid (3)
Staff assistance (1)	I was able to get the help I needed from financial aid staff (1)

Constructive feedback	
Category	*Examples*
Aid eligibility, duration, and responsibilities (11)	I want clarification about scholarship stackability (3)
	I want clarification about conditions for maintaining scholarship eligibility (1)
	I want clarification about how long my scholarship will last (1)
	There should be a way to help undocumented students more easily identify which scholarships they are eligible for (1)
	I want clarification about what types of aid pay for summer semester (1)
	There should be clearer distinction/less conflation of loans vs. gift aid (1)
	I want more clarification about how Federal Work-Study is awarded (1)
	I want more clarification about the difference between subsidized and unsubsidized loans (1)
	Financial aid award letters should define aid types clearly in the letter itself instead of linking out or communicating through pop-up boxes (1)
Vehicles for communication (6)	I would prefer if financial aid communications came through Canvas or an equivalent LMS (4)
	I would prefer if I was notified about financial aid communications via text (2)
Staff assistance (5)	I wasn't able to get the help I needed from financial aid staff (4) *Specific examples: staff members are fellow students who are part-time and/or not sufficiently trained; there are too few staff members to accommodate demand*
	Academic advisors should be cross-trained to answer questions about financial aid and scholarships (1)
	Financial aid offices should employ staff that are fluent in multiple languages to the extent that they can translate higher education and financial aid terms effectively (1)
Accessibility of language (5)	When choosing verbiage, financial aid offices should take underrepresented student populations into consideration (3) *Specific example: Do English Language Learners, first-generation students, nontraditional students, and international students have the English fluency and life experiences/context to fully understand the information financial aid offices send them?*

	Written communication should be offered in languages other than English (1)
	Financial aid award letters should avoid using confusing abbreviations (1) *Specific example: "DCOB GR BUSN NR Tuition" should not be a customer-facing abbreviation*
Cost of Attendance (4)	Financial aid award letters should offer transparency about how tuition and fees are spent (2) *Specific example: I want to see clearer information about "hidden fees" (e.g. extra fees for online courses, differential tuition, etc.)*
	I want clarification on residency requirements for in-state tuition (1) *Specific example: What are the steps/responsibilities and potential consequences of becoming a resident (i.e. loss of scholarships)?*
	Allow students to adjust figures in dashboards (1) *Specific example: If I found textbooks cheaper than what my financial aid offer estimated, I want to be able to customize that field so I understand my costs and budget more accurately*
Expected Family Contribution (2)	There should be an appeal process students can utilize when EFC is not reflective of financial reality (2)
Next steps (1)	Financial aid award letter should clearly outline deadlines for accepting or rejecting aid (1)