



**Utah Board of Higher Education
Utah System of Higher Education
Friday, November 3, 2023**

**COMMITTEE OF THE WHOLE
MINUTES**

Board Members Present

Amanda Covington
Steve Neeleman
Javier Chávez, Jr.
Jon Cox
Sharon Eubank
Danny Ipson
Cydni Tetro

Presidents

Chad Campbell
Jordan Rushton
Jim Taggart
Stacey McIff
Darin Brush
Clay Christensen
Deneece Huftalin (Chris Martin)
Mindy Benson
Brennan Wood
Aaron Weight
Elizabeth Cantwell
Astrid Tuminez
Paul Hacking
Chris Nelson, on behalf of Taylor Randall
Brad Mortensen
Paul Morris, on behalf of Richard Williams

Other Guests

Aaron Anderson, Cicero
Ben Aplanalp, Cicero
Cathy Anderson, UU
Val Peterson, UVU
Wayne Vaught, UVU
Dave Cowley, USU
Laura Snow, UU
Tiara Thompson, Huron (via Zoom)
Steve Han, Huron (via Zoom)

Board Members Absent

Tina Larson
Aaron Skonnard

Office of the Commissioner

Geoffrey Landward, Interim Commissioner
Nate Talley, Deputy Commissioner and CFO
Carrie Mayne, Chief Economist
Alison Adams, General Counsel
Taylor Adams
Kris Coles
Katie Mazzie
Julie Hartley
Jared Haines
Kim Ziebarth
Vic Hockett
Richard Gonzalez
Russ Galt
Brian Shuppy
Malin Francis
David Pulsipher
Jefferson Moss

Chair Covington called the meeting to order at 8:36 a.m.

USHE Prosperity 2020 Update Cicero Report

Aaron Anderson and Ben Aplanalp presented the 2020 prosperity study, initially completed in 2011. The updated 2020 study was designed to examine and measure post-secondary education's impact. Cicero revisited the study to see how things have changed, progressed, etc. The survey was primarily conducted online and is a quantitative study.

Findings: Key takeaways – a post-secondary education (certificate, associate degree, etc., from an accredited institution) is still very beneficial: happiness, health, and income. Financial barriers are preventing individuals from furthering their education. Higher education can propel Utahns to greater levels of attainment for years to come.

Perceptions of the need for higher education have dipped. Steve Neeleman asked if the cost of education is justified based on the amount you pay as opposed to what you make. It could take you eight years or more to pay off debt. Aaron Anderson noted the narrative is that higher education is expensive. There is a fundamental disconnect between actual ROI and perceived ROI. Utah is the most price-sensitive in the country. This is a marketing problem; the message needs to change. President Hacking stated technical colleges are often not looked at as higher education. Aaron Anderson said there is a trust issue. Students want to know the institution will get them where they want to be. President Cantwell stated the narrative around cost is that tuition is the only way to pay for education. They see the sticker price, not understanding how grants, scholarships, etc., drive down the cost. Aaron said students and parents in Utah are less likely to take the time to understand and calculate what the actual cost is. Jon Cox asked about students with some education but no degree. Aaron said some education is still more beneficial than no college, and the benefit also grows as the degree gets higher. Utah has a cultural problem of students opting out/leaving higher education and not returning.

The 2023 study shows students that stop out stated reasons for leaving include mental health challenges becoming an increasingly impactful contributor to not completing.

Cyndi Tetro asked what other states are doing. Aaron said you start with the message. Change the way we talk about what the value of higher education will be. A significant number of students show up skeptical about how higher education will help them. Ipson asked about the marital status of students and how that may affect their education. Institutions shared statistics. Ipson asked about what the message should be to encourage married students. President Mortensen said housing is a big issue. Aaron said to change the narrative from I got married, to I am married. And then how do we help married students attend and provide housing, child care, and flexible hours for classes? Mortensen said this is a real issue. President Taggart said they have a lot of students coming to them with some education, sometimes a degree because they offer flexible hours and access to equipment. Aaron said students want evening access to courses, professors, gyms, and amenities. He advised against throwing money at doing things the way we've always done them. Aminites have been and still are an effective way to recruit students. However, the reality is that it has not done a good job of retaining students and increasing completion rates.

Chair Covington asked what is the solution. – Aaron said it all comes back to one thing: messaging. You need to tell the story of ROI at every step of the process.

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

Common Application

Kris Coles – Huron (Tiara Thompson, Steve Hahn) – There was a discussion about why this is so hard and why it has taken so long. BM Tetro said this should be easy. Interim Commissioner Landward said it is a complex issue, and we have not always had support to move this forward. President Tuminez noted the number of applications is not the problem; the problem is registration. Kris said registration is valuable to institutions, but making the

application process easier for students is what we are trying to do. Tuminez believes the answer is hiring more advisors. Board Steve Neeleman said advisors should be coaching and advising. Why is it so hard to have a common application? We shouldn't be wasting money on this. Cyndi Tetro said it is overwhelming for a large number of students to know how to apply to a post-secondary institution. President Mortensen said they spend a lot of time and money getting students to apply; if they had direct admissions, they could spend that time coaching and advising. Landward said yes, this is a problem, but maybe this is a problem we can solve. President Cantwell said many institutions have already implemented a common application and other things. Instead of inventing everything ourselves, maybe we can get a presentation from other institutions on how they implemented this process.

Chair Covington said she thinks we are hearing frustration about time and money spent, and everyone to be open as we listen to the Huron presentation.

Implementing a common application is something we can do that will make a meaningful difference. Huron identified four areas a common application can be a portal of useful information. There are problematic elements, including platform options, operating model, change management, funding, and budget. It is imperative we bring K-12 along with us. Phase 1 might include capabilities, audience of focus, application types, and fees. Estimating program costs: start-up and recurring.

Recommendations: develop partnerships across USHE and K-12, eliminate application fees for students, and deploy the unified admissions app.

Neeleman asked if the revenue raised through application fees is important to institutions. All institutions agreed the revenue is important. Ipson said that sometimes, when you pay for something, it is taken more seriously. Kris said we are asking for data on fees collected, waived, etc, from institutions.

Chair Covington asked if we could not vote on the 6 million price tag and asked to take 30 days, take the data we have, create a committee, and come back to the next Board meeting with a recommendation.

Landward said it is a two-tiered mandate: common application and direct admissions. We have to do something, but it doesn't matter which we do first.

Neeleman asked if anyone does not think Common Application is a good idea. Mortensen said there has been pushback in the past, which had to do with competition.

Cox asked if there is any value in introducing a technical college to a student. Kris said we are committed to making a process that works for both technical and degree-granting institutions.

Board member John Cox made a motion to allow Presidents and team time to discuss problems and outcomes of the Common Application and come back to the Board; Board Member Steve Neeleman seconded the motion, and the motion carried.

Presidents and Board Priorities

Chair Covington asked the Board to come up with three priorities taken from their previous meeting with presidents.

Interim Commissioner Landward said the office took all of the comments from the presidents and compiled them, which is included in the agenda materials.

Technical Colleges – Chair Covington reviewed the technical institution's priorities. President Taggart said it is important for the Board to understand the differences between the institutions. President Brush said the technical

institutions agreed on the technical college's priorities. They would like a working committee regarding issues needing to be resolved. They would like an assistant commissioner dedicated to technical colleges, and they believe it is important that technical schools provide the education needed to the regions they serve. They would like to be engaged in evaluating, revising, and aligning performance funding measures, growth and capacity funding metrics, and capital development funding allocations.

President Campbell – we won't agree, but we will work together and bring the best product we can. Would like the ability to work together as technical colleges to put together a proposal for capital projects and bring it to the Board. Board Member Danny Ipson asked how tech schools work with employers to help them understand the importance of education. President Christensen stated the ultimate goal is to get them hired but keep them in school until they get their certificate. He also noted access for each institution is different.

President Brush said when they can get together, that helps them tackle issues and problems, which is the answer to that barrier. President Taggart said students work full-time jobs, so it's a time issue for them. They are flexible with lab time and will open on a Saturday if that is what the students need to complete. Program alignment has created a barrier by forcing the technical colleges to have the same hour requirement per course. Not all need that full length; they may only need a portion. That is where being flexible is helpful. Landward said a lot of work has been done in program alignment, and we don't want to lose that. The statute requires program alignment but doesn't define what program alignment is. President Rushton said we need to agree certain core principles are important, but we can't stifle the work. Landward said it's important the Board understands the concerns and has the opportunity to explore other solutions. Board Member Chavez said with the common application, the goal is to migrate to uniformity. However, here we are emphasizing not being unified and having flexibility. He wants to make sure we are not losing anything. Landward said we are still driving towards uniformity but still have flexibility towards workforce needs. Also noted when talking about performance funding, we need to understand that it is incentive funding. President Wood said sometimes performance funding hurts them. His welding program may only require 70 hours, as opposed to another welding program at another institution, which may require 100.

Board Member Danny Ipson made a motion to create a working group for technical colleges to define system priorities; Board Member Steve Neeleman seconded the motion, and the motion carried.

Degree-Granting Priorities

Marketing to promote the value of higher ed/USHE story

Performance Funding Model: reevaluate some things, have consistency in this and other metrics, and recognize secondary students in funding models; PT v FTE.

Shared solution to increase FAFSA; better coordinate financial aid.

Three-year (90 credit) bachelor's degrees; maintain Pell eligibility.

Landward said the process of doing a statewide marketing campaign has been frustrating. There are conflicting views on whether it is effective, and we are losing the battle.

Cantwell said we need a variety of messaging for higher education—two or three simple and clear messages to students and parents. Tetro said our concern is we don't have enough students going into higher education. How do we get students to see there is value in higher education? Our responsibility is to increase the number of students attending schools in Utah. Tuminez said nobody can market their students better than the institutions can. She said she believes the best thing the board can do is to be advocates of higher education. Jon Cox said we need to meet people where they're at. What is the message we want to communicate?

Covington said there needs to be multiple layers of marketing. Believes we can come up with a better, sophisticated model of marketing. Neeleman asked what we have already done. Trisha provided a brief background of what the previous board did. Neeleman asked to have the first Cicero report circulated to the Board.

Mortensen said we have other partners in the community that want us to be successful. We can use these partners, including the LDS church, Ken C, alum groups, etc.

Eubank said the main message is higher education pays.

Ipson asked the institutions what is their ask of the Board. Tuminez said for the Board to become advocates.

Ipson nominated himself to work with Trisha to prioritize messages and develop the messaging framework. Create a metric for success.

Vice Chair Neeleman moved to recommend the strike force be created that comes back to us within 60 days with an action plan with implementation of said action plan within six months, led by Trisha for appropriate marketing resources with appropriate representation from all 16 institutions with Chris as co-chair. Box member Cox seconded the motion, and the Board members in attendance voted unanimously in favor. The motion passed.

Covington asked about other priorities. Tetro asked about the 3-year bachelor's degree. Julie said we have policies around degrees and the credit hours needed to get them. We may need to change policies to make the 3-year degree work. We will bring several of these programs to the Board in a future meeting. Neeleman said this seems to be a way to save money; Julie said these programs are not always recognized and are not eligible for Pell Grant. Neeleman thinks, based on this, it won't happen. Cantwell believes it will happen. Mortensen said in his Commission meeting, it was discussed that BYU has already implemented this. Mortensen said they were told they don't have to be approved because it is not based on hours but on outcome. Neeleman is asking that we act fast and accelerate this. Tetro ask why Pell Grant would not be eligible. Julie said 90 credit-hour bachelor's degree is not currently recognized nationally. Tuminez believes the 90-credit hour degree will help in maintaining students. Jon Cox said it appears we need to change policy. Chris Martin said some programs won't recognize the 90 credits for your degree. So there are some potential issues. Mortensen asked if we have an existing degree approved, if we can start making adjustments, or if it is subject to approval. It does need to come to the Board for approval. Neeleman said he wants to make sure we don't have a system barrier that will prevent institutions from making these changes. Javier asked if there is a fear that 3-year degrees would be devalued.

Covington said we want to move fast, system office to remove barriers to allow for 90 credit hour degrees, where it makes sense. And include an internal review of barriers for approval and ongoing reports. Include the Council of Presidents in the discussion. We agree that priorities two and three are also priorities.

System Vision and Goals

Not discussed; will move to another meeting.

Utah College Advising Corp

Landward introduced the item, provided some background, and noted the program would run out of money in July.

Taylor Adams presented as outlined in the memo. She noted the program costs 3.7 million to run. She provided information about the high schools participating in the program and the efficacy of college attendance. In Utah, we based the program on national successes and briefly discussed some activities. We have enough money to fund 2023-24. 1.2 million remains unspent, and we request 1.9 million bridge funding for 2024-25. Neeleman asked to study virtual vs in-person counseling outcomes. Tuminez said she would support going to the legislature. Huftalin said she believes this is a no-brainer and can provide data from SLCC on the success. This program will become even more important as we have more first-generation students. President Brush captures this data; about 2 percent of

their students come from these advisors. Chris Martin said the program is very successful for them. Snow has not seen a significant impact.

Board Member Tetro made a motion to allocate 1.96 million in available one-time UHEA set-aside funding to support the continuation of UCAC operations in Fiscal year 2025 and further recommended the Board request ongoing-legislative appropriations for future years provisional on systemwide adoption of the program. Board Member Ipson seconded the motion, and the motion carried.

System Budget Request

FY 2024-2025 USHE Operating Budget Recommendation

Nate provided an overview of the system budget and process. He encouraged the Board to review these materials located on the website.

Chair Covington made a motion to approve the Fiscal Year 2024-25 USHE operating budget priorities and authorize the Commissioner to make any subsequent technical adjustments, including rounding, necessary to finalize the budget prior to submitting it to the Governor and Legislature. Sharon Eubank seconded the motion, and the motion carried.

Compensation and Mandatory

Board Member Neeleman made a motion that the Board request for USHE institutions to be funded on par with state employees and state agencies with respect to increases in compensation and mandatory costs in FY 2024-25. Board Member Ipson seconded the motion, and the motion carried.

Performance Funding

There was a discussion on whether we should keep the system all or nothing format or go back to each institution for themselves. President Mortensen believes we are on the right course. President Huftalin believes the non-competitive plan is the right one. Board Member Jon Cox said he heard that institutions were frustrated with moving the goals. President Taggart said access cannot be the only goal because the definition of access is to reach students who may not have attended school. Taggart said high school graduates enrolling in school is not the story we want to tell. We have non-traditional students attending and returning to school. To say the system is missing out on access is not telling the whole story.

Chair Covington proposed that each president bring their proposals to the next Council of Presidents meeting.

Board member Cox made a motion to approve the request for \$30 million of new ongoing performance funding to be appropriated into the Performance Funding Restricted Account and allocated to institutions under the new performance funding model. Board Member Sharon Eubank seconded the motion, and the motion carried.

Degree-Granting Performance Funding

Chair Covington made a motion that the Board request ongoing performance funding appropriated in the 2023 General Session be allocated to institutions consistent with performance achieved against the 2022 performance metric targets and further recommend that the remaining 2023 General Session ongoing performance funding appropriations be distributed to institutions

under the new performance funding model, with any unearned funding set aside for future recovery. Board Member Neeleman seconded the motion, and the motion carried.

Enrollment Growth

Board Member Eubank moved the Board not to submit a budget request for degree-granting institution enrollment growth and further moved the Board to approve technical education growth in the amount of \$6,657,000 and authorize the Commissioner to make subsequent adjustments consistent with any clarification of legislative intent as it relates to technical education capacity funding appropriated in the 2023 General Session. Due to sound issues, the second was inaudible. The motion carried.

Equipment

Board Member Neeleman moved to recommend the Board does not submit a budget request for equipment this year. Chair Covington seconded the motion, and the motion carried.

Systemwide Priorities, External & Non-USHE Request

Chair Covington made a motion to approve funding in the amount of \$255,600 ongoing and \$1,500,000 one-time for the system-level priorities of an additional attorney general for technical colleges and a rewrite of the NorthStar software system. Board Member Cox seconded the motion, and the motion carried.

FY 2024-2025 USHE Capital Budget Recommendation

Utah State – Dedicated Funds Project

Dave Cowley, USU, presented as outlined in the agenda.

Board Member Jon Cox made a motion to approve Utah State University's Administrative Services Addition as a dedicated project supported with available dedicated project funds and to approve the request to obligate the first \$9,000,000 of USU's FY 2025 capital projects fund allocation and balance for the construction of the College of Veterinary Medicine Facility. Board Member Tetro seconded the motion, and the motion carried.

Southern Utah University – Dedicated Funds Project

President Benson presented as outlined in the agenda.

Board Member Cox made a motion to approve Southern Utah University's Highway 56 Phoenix Plaza as a dedicated project supported with available one-time dedicated project funds and ongoing state funding for operations and maintenance. Board Member Ipson seconded the motion, and the motion carried.

Snow College – Non-Dedicated Capital Project

President McIff presented as outlined in the agenda.

Chair Covington made a motion to request the Snow College Social Science Classroom and Lab Building as the System's degree-granting non-dedicated project priority and use any available dedicated project fund allocations and balances to reduce the request for a new one-time Income Tax Fund for the project. Board Member Tetro seconded the motion, and the motion carried.

Ogden-Weber Technical College Non-Dedicated Project
President Taggart presented as outlined in the agenda.

Board Member Cox made a motion to request the Ogden-Weber Technical College Pathway Building as the System's technical college project priority and use any available Technical College Capital Project Fund allocations and balances to reduce the request for new one-time Income Tax Fund for the project. Chair Covington seconded the motion, and the Board members in attendance voted unanimously in favor. The motion passed.

Snow College – Capital Project
Nate Talley, USHE, presented as outlined in the agenda.

Board member Neeleman made a motion to request funding to support Snow College's acquisition of the Nephi Property landbank. Board Member Cox seconded the motion, and the motion carried.

FY 2024-2025 Preliminary Tuition and Fees Discussion

This item was moved to the next meeting.

Consent Calendar

Chair Covington made a motion to approve the Consent Calendar. Board Member Cox seconded the motion, and the motion carried.

Closed Session

Board Member Cox made a motion to go into a closed session for the purposes of discussing the character, professional competence, or physical or mental health of an individual(s). Board Member Tetro seconded the motion, and the motion carried.

Board Member Neeleman made a motion to adjourn. Board Member Cox seconded the motion, and the meeting was adjourned.

The meeting adjourned at 3:55 p.m.

Date Approved: December 1, 2023



Geoffrey Landward, Secretary