



UTAH SYSTEM OF
HIGHER EDUCATION

November 3, 2023

MEMORANDUM

USHE Presidential Priorities; System Vision and Goals Discussion

Following its first meeting in August 2023, the Board requested an opportunity to hear the top three priorities and challenges from the sixteen presidents. The Board reconvened several weeks later with the presidents and engaged in a listening session to better understand the needs and challenges within the System.

At the Board's request, the Commissioner's office recorded and compiled all the presidents' priorities. The technical college presidents elected to meet and find a consensus on their top three priorities, which are attached to this memo. The degree-granting presidents' priorities are provided in a separate attachment, arranged to show common themes.

The Board intends to review these priorities, listen to additional insight from the presidents, and then discuss these lists to settle on approximately three priorities on which to focus for the following year.

The Board will then discuss formulating its vision for the Utah System of Higher Education and to review the current goals.

As a reference, the previous Board had established the following vision and mission:

Our Vision

The Board will ensure the System provides every Utahn—in every place and every circumstance—an affordable certificate or degree at a USHE institution that will meaningfully improve their lives through economic opportunity, civic engagement, and personal fulfillment.

Our Mission

The Utah Board of Higher Education governs and supports the Utah System of Higher Education to equitably provide accessible, valuable, innovative, and affordable higher education for students to expand their economic mobility, enhance their cultural awareness, and improve their overall quality of life.

System Goals

The current System goals are based on the statewide attainment goals established by the legislatively created Higher Education Strategic Planning Commission. They are as follows:

- Develop, strengthen, and leverage an equitable, seamless, and articulated System of higher education built on a foundation of quality, excellence, and remarkable student outcomes.
- 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 the 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 the completion rate of graduates in high-demand, high-wage programs by 7% in 5 years.
- Increase the completion rate of underrepresented groups in programs aligned with high-wage, high-demand jobs by 8% in 5 years.
- Leverage the resources and the agenda of the Utah System of Higher Education to bolster Utah's communities, culture, and economy and position Utah as a leader in the global knowledge economy through research and discovery, scholarship and creativity, and technological innovation.

Commissioner's Recommendation

Establishing a vision, a mission, and statewide goals is a statutory responsibility solely within the discretion of the Board. Accordingly, the Commissioner will not make any recommendations.

However, following the discussion at its meeting, the Board may elect to keep the vision and mission as written, revise it, or establish a new vision and mission for the System. The Board may also discuss any revisions or additions it may seek to implement regarding the System's current statewide attainment goals.

Attachments

November 3, 2023

Institutional Priorities: Degree-Granting Institutions

The following were ranked as the top three priorities by degree-granting presidents.

1. **7/8 degree-granting presidents ranked '*Marketing to promote the value of higher ed/USHE story*' in their top three priorities.**
 - **Comments:**
 - i. **USU:** We are particularly concerned about the difference between the current news stories about the dropping importance of a college degree and the vast preponderance of evidence showing that by any measure of health, total lifetime economic value, family stability, etc., getting a college degree is going to improve the life of an individual and their family. We would include #6 (common measurement for econ value/impact) in this discussion, as helping people understand the value of our institutions of higher ed must at some point include Marketing/messaging/explanation of their value as drivers of local and regional economic improvement, and in particular the differences in the mission of each USHE institution and the important roles these missions play in the overall robust portfolio of higher education in the State of Utah.
 - ii. **UVU:** This is beyond mere, impressionistic marketing. We need to understand better the differentiating missions of the sixteen institutions and tell the success stories more effectively. The degree-granting institutions paid \$100k each to have better storytelling at the system level, but we had mixed success at best. A more strategic and proactive approach to communicating the value of higher education is one that the system should be taking and would ultimately have a positive impact on many of the other priorities captured on the broader list. This also doesn't preclude individual institutions from their own comms and storytelling.
 - iii. **Weber State:** Not necessarily the USHE story, but something that's more identifiable and recognizes the existing brands of our institutions instead of the ambiguous "College is Utah" marketing.

2. **5/8 degree-granting presidents ranked '*Performance Funding Model; reevaluate some things; have consistency in this and other metrics; recognize secondary students in funding models; PT v FTE*' in their top three priorities.**
 - **Comments:**
 - i. **Snow:** Add "Reexamine and Discuss the growth/access metric."
 - ii. **USU:** a set of common measures for the entire portfolio of missions across the USHE institutions that provides a menu of incentives for, e.g.: research, lifelong learning, underserved populations, traditional students, workforce development for industry, transfer preparation, retention & completion, job placement in 5 years.

3. **5/8 degree-granting presidents ranked '*Shared solutions to increase FAFSA; better coordinate financial aid*' in their top three priorities.**
4. **3/8 degree-granting presidents ranked; '*Work together instead of competitively/incentives to collaborate*' in their top three priorities.**
 - **Comments:**
 - i. **SLCC:** Concurrently with "3-year (90 credit) Bachelor's Degree."
 - ii. **Snow:** This is part of the growth discussion; while the goal is to expand the pie of Utah students, we've seen that the pie is not expanding, so we end up competing for many of the same students, which is expensive and potentially punitive.
 - iii. **U of U:** Working collaboratively to meet current access goals.
5. **3/8 degree-granting presidents ranked '*Three-year (90-credit) bachelor's degrees; maintain Pell eligibility; move as a system*' in their top three priorities.**
 - **Comments:**
 - i. **SLCC:** Concurrently with "Incentives to Collaborate."
 - ii. **Snow:** Include Snow and SLCC in consideration of 90-credit bachelor's degree.
6. **1/8 presidents ranked each of the following in their top three priorities:**
 - **Weber State: '*Shared services: cybersecurity*'**
 - i. **Comment:** Tied with Shared Services: Title IX issues.
 - **Utah Tech University: '*Affordable student housing: innovative approaches*'**
 - **Weber State: '*Shared services: Title IX issues*'**
 - i. **Comment:** Tied with Shared Services: Cybersecurity
 - **USU: '*Define and incentivize research needs*'**
 - i. **Comment:** Define desired areas for growth in research that specifically serve the health, economic growth, and leadership of the State of Utah. Right now, we lack basic metrics, an understanding of economic value, and awareness of

operational complexities. Growth metrics would help us address state need, target faculty hires and infrastructure enhancements, and characterize costs so that ROI could be reported.

November 3, 2023

Institutional Priorities: Technical Colleges

Prepared for the Utah Board of Higher Education and the Commissioner of Higher Education

The following three priorities were cooperatively determined by the eleven institutions with technical college missions:

1. Preserve flexibility for technical colleges to stay nimble and meet regional workforce demands.

- The Utah Board of Higher Education can utilize the presidents to innovate and recommend solutions to meet the Board's vision. To do this, the presidents will meet regularly to discuss best practices, take on assignments from the Board, and form recommendations. The presidents will organize the meetings and request the Associate Commissioner of Technical Education participate as a liaison to the Commissioner's office.
- Technical college vice presidents (i.e., instruction, student affairs, and finance) also need to meet regularly. The presidents request that the cognizant assistant commissioners attend these meetings and that the Board and Commissioner consider appointing an assistant commissioner of student affairs dedicated to the technical colleges.
- There have been benefits of the program alignment process led by the Commissioner's office over the past two years. Based on experience, the presidents agree that changes need to be made to the process. Primarily, they recommend that the process: 1) is led by the institutions' instructional officers, with the engagement of faculty and support from the Commissioner's office; and 2) focus on aligning the core curriculum of programs and leave institutions to define the elective courses and overall program lengths necessary to meet the needs of their regional employers.

2. Evaluate, revise, and align performance funding measures, growth and capacity funding metrics, and capital development funding allocations.

- The institutions support performance funding that has consistent and achievable outcomes. There is also a need for a consistent growth and capacity funding formula (including staffing needed for new or expanded facilities). Institutions also support an annual allocation of capital development funding like that which benefits the degree-

granting institutions. The presidents can convene the institutional finance and instructional officers and work with them to develop recommendations to the Board and Commissioner.

3. Address the need for viable student information systems as shared services that accommodate all institutions.

- Northstar is the student information system currently used by seven technical colleges and supports Utah's unique (i.e., course-based, flexibly scheduled, and competency-based) instructional model. After an extensive review of other products, the Commissioner's office recently determined there is no reasonable alternative to Northstar and that significant investment is needed to optimize it. If done correctly, a Northstar rebuild will create efficiencies, improve the student experience, allow better data collection, and more. Meanwhile, many enhancements to Northstar are needed and should be implemented without waiting for a rebuild. It is equally important to ensure the four institutions that have implemented alternative student information systems are allowed to continue, especially since Northstar and Banner (used by some degree-granting institutions) are not optimally compatible.