

**Utah Board of Higher Education
Virtual Meeting
Friday, July 18, 2025**

**COMMITTEE OF THE WHOLE
MINUTES**

Board Members Present

Amanda Covington, Chair
Jon Cox, Vice Chair
Javier Chavez Jr.
Danny Ipson
Steve Neeleman
Aaron Skonnard

Board Members Absent

Cyndi Tetro

Office of the Commissioner

Geoffrey Landward, Commissioner
Alison Adams, General Counsel and Board Secretary
Taylor Adams, Associate Commissioner of Student Affairs
TJ Bliss, Associate Commissioner for Academic Affairs
Kris Coles, Senior Assistant Commissioner of Access and College in High School
Cassidy Dragunat, Assistant Commissioner of Financial Aid
Trisha Dugovic, Director of Communication
Brynn Fronk, Executive Assistant to the Utah Board of Higher Education
Richard Gonzalez, Assistant Commissioner of Adult Learners
Jordan Hill, Assistant Commissioner for Industry Workforce Initiatives
Vic Hockett, Associate Commissioner of Talent Ready Utah
Carrie Mayne, Chief Economist
Katie Mazzie, Assistant Commissioner of Strategic and Government Affairs
Hilary Renshaw, Associate General Counsel
Brian Shuppy, Senior Assistant Commissioner for Budget and Finance
Jeremias Solari, Senior Assistant Commissioner of Research and Data Systems
Angie Stallings, Deputy Commissioner and COO
Jacob Wright, Senior Assistant Commissioner of Facilities and Finance
Kim Ziebarth, Associate Commissioner of Technical Education

Institutional Presidents Present

Mindy Benson, Southern Utah University
Darin Brush, Davis Technical College
Chad Campbell, Bridgerland Technical College
Clay Christensen, Mountainland Technical College
Paul Hacking, Tooele Technical College
Brad Mortensen, Weber State University
Stacey McIff, Snow College
Greg Peterson, Salt Lake Community College

Jordan Rushton, Dixie Technical College
Shane Smeed, Utah Tech University
Al Smith, Utah State University (interim)
Jim Taggart, Ogden Weber Technical College
Astrid Tuminez, Utah Valley University
Aaron Weight, Uintah Basin Technical College
Brennan Wood, Southwest Technical College

Others

Troy D'Ambrosio, Chief of Staff and VP for Innovation, University of Utah
Tiger Funk, VP for Operations, Southern Utah University
Teresa Kehl, Deputy Chief of Staff and Special Assistant to the First Lady, University of Utah
Charlton Park, Chief Financial Officer and Chief Analytics Officer, University of Utah Hospital and Clinics
Mary Pearson, VP of Finance and Administration, Southern Utah University

Erin Rothwell, VP for Research, University of Utah
Tony Wagner, Chief Financial Officer, University of Utah

Chair Covington called the meeting to order at 8:00 a.m.

Committee of the Whole *Board Executive Committee*

Chair Covington shared that Board member Chavez Jr. was reappointed as a member of the Board Executive Committee. This was an information item only; no action was taken.

Update on Impact of Recent Federal Legislation on Higher Education

Commissioner Landward introduced the agenda item to the Board members. Katie Mazzie then summarized the impacts of the One Big Beautiful Bill Act on higher education and shared what is anticipated for the future. Charlton Park, CFO and Chief Analytics Officer for University of Utah Hospitals and Clinics, shared insights on the impacts on University of Utah Health Medicaid payments. Erin Rothwell, Vice President for Research at the University of Utah, shared insights on the implications for research. Chair Covington asked for an update on this agenda item at the September Board meeting. This was an information item only; no action was taken.

Strategic Plan Update: Access

Taylor Adams provided an update on the access pillar in the Strategic Plan. Richard Gonzalez highlighted community-based organizations. President Peterson and President McIff then shared their experience partnering with these organizations at SLCC and Snow College. Commissioner Landward and Taylor Adams shared an update on First Credential, followed by an update on Admit Utah, presented by Kris Coles and Jeremias Solari. This was an information item only; no action was taken.

Deferment Landscape

Based on the Board's request at the June 6 meeting, Taylor Adams and Cassidy Dragunat provided an update on deferment practices across all 16 institutions. This was an information item only; no action was taken.

Accelerated Bachelor's Degrees

Commissioner Landward and TJ Bliss provided an update on recent developments related to accelerated bachelor's degrees. This was an information item only; no action was taken.

Academic Unit Discussion

Commissioner Landward led a discussion around the approval of administrative units, centers, and institutes. **Board member Ipson moved to direct the Commissioner's Office to study academic units and relevant approval policies and provide information and recommendations to the Board at an upcoming meeting in 2025. Board member Ipson further moved to approve a pause on approval of new academic centers and institutes unless mandated by state law until the Board can consider the information and recommendations from the study. Vice Chair Cox seconded the motion, and the Board members in attendance voted unanimously in favor. The motion passed.**

FY 2026-2027 Capital Budget Process Guidelines

Jacob Wright presented the Capital Budget Process Guidelines for FY 2026-2027. The technical college presidents voiced their concerns and challenges with the guidelines. The Board reiterated its preference for last year's proposal and agreed to continue dialogue on this approach. **Board member Skonnard moved to approve the Capital Budget Process Guidelines for FY 2026-27. Board member Chavez Jr. seconded the motion, and the Board members in attendance voted unanimously in favor. The motion passed.**

FY 2026-2027 Operating Budget Process Guidelines

Brian Shuppy presented the Operating Budget Process Guidelines for FY 2026-2027. **Board member Neeleman moved to approve the Operating Budget Process Guidelines for FY 2026-27. Chair Covington seconded the motion, and the Board members in attendance voted unanimously in favor. The motion passed.**

Utah System of Higher Education Strategic Reinvestment Plans – Status Updates

Commissioner Landward introduced the agenda item, then the following institutions provided Strategic Reinvestment Plans updates:

- University of Utah – Tony Wagner
- Utah State University – Interim President Smith
- Weber State University – President Mortensen

This was an information item only; no action was taken.

Consent Calendar

Vice Chair Cox moved to approve the consent calendar. Board member Chavez Jr. seconded the motion, and the Board members in attendance voted unanimously in favor. The motion passed.

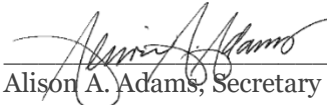
Board member Ipson moved to go into closed session for the purpose of discussing the character, professional competence, or physical or mental health of an individual; impending litigation; or the sale of real property. Board member Neeleman seconded the motion, and the Board members in attendance voted unanimously in favor. The motion passed.

Closed Session

Chair Covington moved to end closed session. Board member Skonnard seconded the motion, and the Board members in attendance voted unanimously in favor. The motion passed.

Vice Chair Cox moved to adjourn. Board member Neeleman seconded the motion, and the Board members in attendance voted unanimously in favor. The motion passed.

The meeting adjourned at 11:40 a.m.


Alison A. Adams, Secretary

Date Approved: September 4, 2025