



**Utah Board of Higher Education
Virtual Meeting
Thursday, November 20, 2025**

**COMMITTEE OF THE WHOLE
MINUTES**

Board Members Present

Amanda Covington, Chair
Jon Cox, Vice Chair
Javier Chavez Jr.
Jeremy Hafen
Jodi Hart
Danny Ipson
Garrett Largent
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
Trisha Dugovic, Director of Communication
Brynn Fronk, Executive Assistant to the Utah Board of Higher Education
Vic Hockett, Associate Commissioner of Talent Ready Utah
Steve Hood, Assistant Commissioner of Academic Affairs
Carrie Mayne, Chief Economist
Katie Mazzie, Associate Commissioner of Strategic Initiatives, Community & Government Relations
Hilary Renshaw, Associate General Counsel
Brian Shuppy, Senior Assistant Commissioner for Budget & Finance
Angie Stallings, Deputy Commissioner and COO
Nate Talley, Deputy Commissioner and CFO
Melissa Van Hien, Executive Assistant to the Commissioner and Office Manager
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
Leslie Durham, Weber State University (interim)
Stacee McIff, Snow College
Brad Mortensen, Utah State University
Greg Peterson, Salt Lake Community College

Taylor Randall, University of Utah
Jordan Rushton, Dixie Technical College
Shane Smeed, Utah Tech University
Jim Taggart, Ogden Weber Technical College
Kent Thygerson, Tooele Technical College (interim)
Aaron Weight, Uintah Basin Technical College
Brennan Wood, Southwest Technical College

Others

Mark Cain, Executive Director, my529
Dave Cowley, Vice President for Finance and Administrative Services, Utah State University
Troy D'Ambrosio, Chief of Staff & Vice President for Innovation, University of Utah

Harrison Kleiner, General Education Council Member, Utah State University
Madeleine Jones, Program Associate, The Dignity Index
Mitzi Montoya, Executive Vice President for Academic Affairs, University of Utah
Val Peterson, Vice President of Administration and Strategic Relations, Utah Valley University
Tami Pyfer, Chief External Relations Officer, The Dignity Index
James Sage, General Education Council Member, Southern Utah University
Matthew Sanders, General Education Council Member, Utah State University
Leigh Shaw, General Education Council Member, Weber State University
Wayne Vaught, Provost & Senior Vice President of Academic Affairs, Utah Valley University
Danny Wall, Executive Director, Real Estate, University of Utah

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

Committee of the Whole

Bringing Dignity to Campus Dialogue with the Dignity Index

Tami Pyfer and Madeleine Jones from the Dignity Index presented the case for dignity and the work the Dignity Index is doing on campuses. The Board members asked questions about funding sources, connections to Jonathan Haidt's research, and coordination with Utah Valley University. This was an information item only; no action was taken.

General Education Priorities in the Utah System of Higher Education

TJ Bliss provided an overview of General Education priorities, noting the council's achievements in organizing faculty workgroups and reducing barriers to credit transfer. He outlined current initiatives focused on evaluating best practices, refining outcomes, and establishing bylaws to strengthen the framework. Discussion centered on challenges with transfer alignment, particularly lower-division prerequisites, and underscored the critical role of advising in preventing student setbacks. Also highlighted were the extensive use of AP exams and prior learning credits, ongoing articulation efforts, and the importance of streamlining processes. **Vice Chair Cox moved to approve the Charge to the General Education Council. Board member Chavez Jr. seconded the motion, and the Board members in attendance voted unanimously in favor. The motion passed.**

Center for Civic Excellence at Utah State University

TJ Bliss introduced Harrison Kleiner, who presented the Center for Civic Excellence at Utah State University to the Board members. At the Board's request, Harrison discussed USU's approach to scaling. **Board member Ipson moved to approve the Center for Civic Excellence at Utah State University. Board member Hart seconded the motion, and the Board members in attendance voted unanimously in favor. The motion passed.**

my529 Update

Commissioner Landward introduced Mark Cain, executive director for my529. Mark then provided a my529 update for Board members. This was an information item only; no action was taken.

Federal Update

Katie Mazzie reviewed the Trump Administration's Compact for Academic Excellence in Higher Education with Board members. Vice Chair Cox asked whether the ACT admissions requirement will return, and Provost Mitzi Montoya responded. This was an information item only; no action was taken.

Academic Year 2026-2027 Tuition and General Fee Adjustment Guidelines

Nate Talley presented the tuition and general fee guidance for Academic Year 2026-2027 to the Board members. **Vice Chair Cox moved the Board to approve the Academic Year 2026-2027 institutional tuition and general fee guidance as presented. Chair Covington seconded the motion, and the Board members in attendance voted unanimously in favor. The motion passed.**

Annual Performance Funding Metric Evaluation and Goal Setting

Nate Talley presented the USHE institution Academic Year 2024-2025 performance funding amounts consistent with the UBHE adopted Fiscal Year 2027 operating budget request, which the Board members and presidents discussed. **Board member Skonnard moved the Board to approve the proposed performance funding distributions of appropriations from the 2023 through 2025 legislative sessions, and the newly requested \$16.7 million in appropriations for the upcoming 2026 legislative session. Board member Largent seconded the motion, and the Board members in attendance voted unanimously in favor. The motion passed.**

Nate Talley presented the proposed Academic Year 2025-2026 performance goals. The Board members discussed changing the proposed annual performance goal. **Board member Skonnard moved that the Board adopt an AY 2025-2026 Access goal of 52.66%, as well as the Timely Completion and High Yield goals as proposed for Academic Year 2025-2026. Board member Hafen seconded the motion, and the Board members in attendance voted unanimously in favor. The motion passed.**

Fiscal Year 2026-2027 USHE Operating and Capital Budget Updates

Nate Talley presented the updated operating and capital budget request for the 2026 Legislative Session. **Board member Ipson moved to approve the Fiscal Year 2026-2027 USHE operating and capital budget updates, pursuant to motions passed in the October meeting. Board member Ipson further moved to instruct the Commissioner's Office to coordinate these updates with Board action taken on Fiscal Year 2026-2027 performance funding distributions where necessary. Board member Largent seconded the motion, and the Board members in attendance voted unanimously in favor. The motion passed.**

University of Utah – Disposal of Real Property

Jacob Wright presented the University of Utah's request for the Board to approve the sale of real property. Danny Wall, Executive Director of Real Estate at the University of Utah, spoke to the sale of the property and answered questions from the Board. **Board member Largent moved to approve the University of Utah's request to sell 2.165 acres and dedicate an additional 1.484 acres of property at 10608 South Grandville Avenue in South Jordan to the City of South Jordan in accordance with Board Policy R704. Board member Hafen seconded the motion, and the Board members in attendance voted unanimously in favor. The motion passed.**

Utah State University – Revenue Bond-Financed Project Request for the 2026 Legislative Session

Nate Talley presented Utah State University's request for legislative approval of bond issuances associated with a student housing project at USU Eastern. Dave Cowley, USU VP for Finance and Administrative Services, provided background on housing at USU Eastern and spoke to the request. He then answered questions from the Board members. **Board member Ipson moved that the Board authorize Utah State University to seek legislative approval of bond issuances associated with the USU Eastern Student Housing project, conditional on the institution's determination that other financing mechanisms, including P-3 arrangements, are less**

viable, with findings reported to the Commissioner's Office. Board member Ipson further moved that USU conduct an analysis of demand for student housing at USU Eastern, and report findings to OCHE, prior to requesting legislative approval for bonding.

If the Legislature approves the bonds, the institution's request for an approving resolution should include financial analyses that document the feasibility and sufficiency of revenue streams necessary to support the institution's currently outstanding indebtedness and the proposed revenue bonds, as well as any other information required by statute or policy.

Vice Chair Cox seconded the motion, and the Board members in attendance voted unanimously in favor. The motion passed.

Utah State University – Hazardous Waste Facility Non-State Funded Project Request

Jacob Wright presented Utah State University's request to replace their Hazardous Waste Facility. Dave Cowley spoke to the request and answered questions from the Board. **Board member Hafen moved to authorize Utah State University to seek legislative approval for a new hazardous waste facility, and a state appropriation for ongoing operations and maintenance costs as described. Board member Hart seconded the motion, and the Board members in attendance voted unanimously in favor. The motion passed.**

Consent Calendar

Chair Covington asked about Utah Valley University's new Bachelor of Applied Practice in Professional Advancement, listed in the Academic Program and Administrative Unit Approvals and Discontinuances under the Reports for Board's Review. UVU Provost Wayne Vaught explained that it replaces the former University Studies degree to better align with professional opportunities for students.

Board member Hart moved to approve the Consent Calendar. Vice Chair Cox 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 Hart seconded the motion, and the Board members in attendance voted unanimously in favor. The motion passed.

CLOSED SESSION

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

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

The meeting adjourned at 12:04 p.m.



Alison A. Adams, Secretary

Date Approved: January 9, 2026