



**Utah Board of Higher Education
Utah System of Higher Education
Thursday, March 26, 2026**

**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 (excused at 8:30 a.m.)
Aaron Skonnard
Cydni Tetro

Board Members Absent

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
Trevor Cross, Systems Administrator
Trisha Dugovic, Director of Communication
Kevin Enright, Director of Finance and Facilities
Brynn Fronk, Executive Assistant to the Utah Board of Higher Education
Vic Hockett, Associate Commissioner of Talent Ready Utah
Carrie Mayne, Chief Economist
Katie Mazzie, Associate Commissioner of Strategic Initiatives, Community and Government Relations
Hilary Renshaw, Associate General Counsel
Angie Stallings, Deputy Commissioner and COO
Nate Talley, Deputy Commissioner and CFO
Melissa Van Hien, Executive Assistant to the Commissioner and Office Manager
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)
Stacey McIff, Snow College
Brad Mortensen, Utah State University
Taylor Randall, University of Utah

Greg Peterson, Salt Lake Community College
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

Maddie Clements, Community Outreach Representative, Congressman Owens' Office

Troy D'Ambrosio, Chief of Staff and Vice President for Innovation, University of Utah
Stephen Hess, Chief Information Officer, University of Utah
Cassie Meyer, Director of Campus Partnerships, Interfaith America
Rob Muir, Associate Vice President for Debt and Asset Management, University of Utah
Chris Nelson, Chief University Relations Officer and Secretary to the University, University of Utah
Rollie Olson, Assistant Director of Alignment & Strategic Communications, President's Office, Interfaith America
Eboo Patel, Founder and President, Interfaith America
Brad Patterson, Attorney, Gilmore Bell
Stephanie Patton, Catalyst Center Program Director, Utah State Board of Education
Rich Saunders, Chief Executive Officer, Proxima Careers
Tim Tingey, Vice President of Finance and Administrative Services, Snow College
Wayne Vaught, Provost and Senior Vice President for Academic Affairs, Utah Valley University
Anthony Wagner, Chief Financial Officer, University of Utah
Rebecca Walsh, Director of Public Relations and Communications, University of Utah
Cameron Wright, Chief Operating Officer, Proxima Careers

Chair Covington called the meeting to order at 7:30 a.m.

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. Board member Hart seconded the motion, and the Board members in attendance voted unanimously in favor. The motion passed.

COMMITTEE OF THE WHOLE

Resolution of Appreciation for President Astrid S. Tuminez

Chair Covington highlighted the career of President Tuminez and thanked her for her dedication to Utah Valley University. No formal action of the Board was required or taken since the resolution was simply for recognition.

Interfaith MOU

Commissioner Landward introduced the Interfaith MOU. This was an information item only; no action was taken.

The Promise of Pluralism

Commissioner Landward introduced Dr. Eboo Patel, and turned the time over to him to talk about the broader principles of pluralism. Dr. Patel presented the Promise of Pluralism. This was an information item only; no action was taken.

Government Relations Updates

Commissioner Landward expressed gratitude to the presidents and their staff for their tremendous work during the legislative session. Katie Mazzie highlighted significant bills from the legislative session.

Chair Covington moved to direct the Office of the Commissioner to review the Board’s bylaws and make recommendations for amendments to create a Board Committee on Performance, Evaluation, Succession Planning, and Training. Vice Chair Cox seconded the motion, and the Board members in attendance voted unanimously in favor. The motion passed.

Nate Talley reviewed the 2026 General Legislative Session appropriations and budget policies.

Board member Tetro moved to initiate the withdrawal of \$10,541,400 from the Higher Education Student Success Endowment in Fiscal Year 2026 in order to primarily execute on the 2026 General Session legislative intent language requiring a backfill to the corresponding reduction to the Board’s Student Assistance line item in Fiscal Year 2027. Board member Chavez Jr. seconded the motion, and the Board members in attendance voted unanimously in favor. The motion passed.

Non-Dedicated Capital Development Projects Prioritization

Nate Talley presented the Non-Dedicated Capital Development Projects Prioritization. The Board members debated whether or not to reprioritize the non-dedicated projects.

Board member Skonnard moved that the Board elect to reprioritize non-dedicated projects for degree-granting institutions and maintain the existing prioritization of non-dedicated projects for technical colleges for the upcoming budget year. Vice Chair Cox seconded the motion, Board members Hart and Largent voted no, and all other Board members in attendance voted in favor. The motion passed.

Higher Education Student Success Endowment – Request for Board Allocation of FY 2026 Proceeds

Chair Covington recused herself from the item based on a perceived if not actual conflict of interest with her professional life and turned the meeting over to Vice Chair Cox to lead. Nate Talley introduced the agenda item and turned the time over to Rich Saunders from Proxima. Rich and Cameron Wright presented Proxima’s work to the Board and their funding request.

Board member Tetro moved to authorize using \$400,000 of the Board’s FY 2026 Higher Education Student Success Endowment allocation to support Proxima’s mission and request as proposed, with the addition of \$50,000 for interventions focused in rural Utah, for a total of \$450,000. Board member Skonnard seconded the motion, Chair Covington abstained, and all other Board members in attendance voted in favor. The motion passed.

Fiscal Year 2027 Institutional Strategic Reinvestment Guidelines

Nate Talley provided an overview of the Fiscal Year 2027 Institutional Strategic Reinvestment Guidelines.

Board member Ipson moved to adopt the year-two degree-granting strategic reinvestment initiative guidance, and first-year technical college strategic reinvestment framework and parameters. Board member Largent seconded the motion, and the Board members in attendance voted unanimously in favor. The motion passed.

Planned Space Utilization for Newly Constructed Buildings

Nate Talley introduced the agenda item and then turned the time over to Kevin Enright, who presented the item.

Board member Largent moved to certify that the capital projects as funded in the 2024 Legislative Session substantially meet intent language requirements for space utilization plans. Board member Hafen seconded the motion, and the Board members in attendance voted unanimously in favor. The motion passed.

University of Utah Indenture Amendment Request

Nate Talley introduced the request and then turned the time over to the University of Utah. Tony Wagner and Rob Muir presented the details of the request and provided additional explanation of the transaction.

Board member Ipson moved to approve the University of Utah's request to amend its General Indenture, as the proposed excluded revenues comprise 9.96% of Indenture-defined revenues, and the institution's credit rating of AA+ (S&P) and Aa1 (Moody's) has been reaffirmed. Board member Largent seconded the motion, and the Board members in attendance voted unanimously in favor. The motion passed.

Strategic Plan Update: Completion – Credit for Prior Learning

Katie Mazzie introduced the strategic plan update, which covered the completion pillar. As part of this update, TJ Bliss provided an update on Credit for Prior Learning. Chair Covington asked to hear a report on technical college Credit for Prior Learning at an upcoming Board meeting. This was an information item only; no action was taken.

Approval of Bachelor's Degrees Exceeding 120 Credits

TJ Bliss presented the agenda items to the Board members and addressed their questions.

Vice Chair Cox moved to approve the outlined bachelor's degrees exceeding 120 credits due to licensure or accreditation standards as authorized by statute with an evaluation of standardization of these programs across the System. Board member Hart seconded the motion, and the Board members in attendance voted unanimously in favor. The motion passed.

Catalyst Center Grant Funding

Vic Hockett and Stephanie Patton presented an update on the Catalyst Center. This was an information item only; no action was taken.

Athletics Oversight

Chair Covington shared the appointment of Board member Neeleman as Board liaison on the Athletics Oversight Committee. The Board and presidents discussed the need for a flexible, transparent athletics governance structure amid ongoing national and regulatory uncertainty, with agreement that further study is needed.

Vice Chair Cox moved to direct the Office of the Commissioner to convene an Athletics Oversight Committee composed of Board members, representatives from institutions, and the Office of the Commissioner, to make recommendations to the Board for policies regarding athletics oversight. Board member Ipson seconded the motion, and the Board members in attendance voted unanimously in favor. The motion passed.

Consent Calendar

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

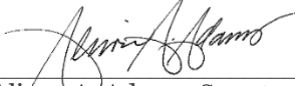
Board member Ipson moved to go into closed session for the purpose of discussing the character, professional competence, or physical or mental health of an individual; impending litigation; or the sale of real property. Board member Hart seconded the motion, and the Board members in attendance voted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

CLOSED SESSION

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

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

The meeting adjourned at 4:05 p.m.


Alison A. Adams, Secretary

Date Approved: May 14, 2026