

**Utah Board of Higher Education
Virtual Meeting
Thursday, July 9, 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
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
Amy Andre, Director of State Youth Apprenticeships
TJ Bliss, Associate Commissioner for Academic Affairs
Tyler Dunn, Industry Engagement Manager
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
Jefferson Moss, Associate Commissioner of Innovation, Commercialization and Economic Development
Hilary Renshaw, Associate General Counsel
Brian Shuppy, Senior Assistant Commissioner for Budget and Finance
Angie Stallings, Deputy Commissioner and COO
Nate Talley, Deputy Commissioner and CFO
Kim Ziebarth, Associate Commissioner of Technical Education

Institutional Presidents Present

Mindy Benson, Southern Utah University
Darin Brush, Davis Technical College
Clay Christensen, Mountainland Technical College
Leslie Durham, Weber State University (Interim)
Stacee McIff, Snow College
Lisa Moon, Bridgerland Technical College
Brad Mortensen, Utah State University
Taylor Randall, University of Utah

Jordan Rushton, Dixie Technical College
Greg Peterson, Salt Lake Community College
Shane Smeed, Utah Tech University
Jim Taggart, Ogden Weber Technical College
Kent Thygerson, Tooele Technical College (Interim)
Wayne Vaught, Utah Valley University (Interim)
Brennan Wood, Southwest Technical College

Others

Michiel Bostick, Vice President of Instructional Services, Uintah Basin Technical College
Mark Cain, Executive Director, my529
Kirt Michaelis, Vice President of Administrative Services/CFO, Mountainland Technical College
Mitzi Montoya, Senior Vice President for Academic Affairs, University of Utah
Angela Smith, COO, Nucleus Institute

Committee of the Whole

Chair Covington called the meeting to order at 1:30 p.m.

Snow College Student Success

President Stacey McIff shared the success story of Snow College student Leonel Valeriano.

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

Regional Framework for a Reimagined Utah System of Higher Education

Commissioner Landward presented the proposed regional framework, including its purpose, guiding principles, and expected outcomes.

Board members expressed strong support, highlighting opportunities for greater collaboration, improved partnerships, and stronger systemwide alignment. Discussion emphasized the importance of change management, leadership engagement, aligned incentives, and recognizing regional differences. The Board expressed optimism that the framework will foster teamwork, encourage innovation, and reduce competition among institutions.

Board member Skonnard moved to adopt the proposed System regional structure and composition, and appoint Board members to each region to guide, oversee, and support integration initiatives in partnership with institutional presidents and trustee leadership. Vice Chair Cox seconded the motion, and Board members in attendance voted unanimously in favor. The motion passed.

The proposed regional framework will be on the agenda for the Higher Education Appropriations Subcommittee meeting in August 2026.

Federal and State Updates

Katie Mazzie provided federal and state legislative updates to the Board, including the congressional appropriations process and the Higher Education Appropriations Subcommittee, Legislative Audit Subcommittee, and Education and Economic Development and Workforce Services Committees.

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

Strategic Plan Update: Financial Value

Katie Mazzie presented an update on the Strategic Plan's Financial Value Pillar. Presentations were also provided by Vic Hockett on the Youth Apprenticeship Governance Council, Tyler Dunn on the Utah Talent Hub, and President Greg Peterson and Amy Andre on the Talent Ready Apprenticeship Connection (TRAC). Board member Neeleman requested additional Talent Hub data, including the number of students obtaining internships and the number of internship opportunities being posted.

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

Systemwide Program Plan

TJ Bliss and Kim Ziebarth presented the annual system-wide program plan, outlining planned academic and technical education programs across USHE institutions. Staff highlighted the plan's role in supporting Board oversight, workforce alignment, regional collaboration, and early identification of program duplication or mission concerns.

Board members and presidents discussed workforce needs, program review timelines, institutional flexibility, and opportunities to support system redesign and regionalization through program planning. Chair Covington expressed support for the proposed task force and suggested including one or more board of trustees chairs in the group to provide additional institutional perspective.

Vice Chair Cox moved to establish a task force comprised of Board members and staff from the Office of the Commissioner to review the systemwide program plan and return with recommendations at the next Board meeting. Vice Chair Cox further moved to delegate authority to the Commissioner to review any mid-cycle updates to the systemwide program plan per Board Policy R401, so that institutional boards of trustees may approve any programs added to the plan before the Board's next annual review in 2027. Board member Skonnard seconded the motion, and Board members in attendance voted unanimously in favor. The motion passed.

FY 2028 Operating Budget Process Guidance

Nate Talley presented the FY 2028 Operating Budget Process Guidance to the Board members.

Board member Chavez Jr. moved to approve the USHE Operating Budget Guidance for FY 2027-28. Chair Covington seconded the motion, and Board members in attendance voted unanimously in favor. The motion passed.

FY 2028 Capital Budget Process Guidance

Kevin Enright presented the proposed FY 2027-28 capital budget process guidelines, including the process and scoring criteria for capital project requests.

Board Member Ipson raised concerns that the proposed scoring rubric may discourage institutions from accumulating dedicated capital funds and requested further consideration of how those funds should be reflected in project prioritization. The Board agreed that additional review of the non-dedicated project scoring criteria was warranted, with Board Member Ipson assisting in that effort. Following the review, recommendations will be brought to the Board Executive Committee for consideration, with an update expected at the Board's September meeting.

Board member Ipson moved to approve the Capital Budget Process Guidelines for FY 2027-28 with the exception of the non-dedicated scoring criteria. Board member Hart seconded the motion, and Board members in attendance voted unanimously in favor. The motion passed.

Mountainland Technical College – Disposal of Real Property

Kirt Michaelis presented Mountainland Technical College's sale of properties in Spanish Fork.

Board member Neeleman moved to approve the sale of these properties. Board member Skonnard seconded the motion, and Board members in attendance voted unanimously in favor. The motion passed.

Consent Calendar

Board member Hart moved to approve the consent calendar. Chair Covington seconded the motion, and Board members in attendance voted unanimously in favor. The motion passed.

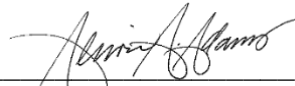
Board member Ipson moved to go into closed session for the purpose of discussing the character, professional competence, or physical or mental health of an individual; impending litigation; or the sale of real property. Board member Chavez Jr. seconded the motion, and the Board members in attendance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

CLOSED SESSION

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

Chair Covington 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 5:00 p.m.


Alison A. Adams, Secretary

Date Approved: September 9, 2026

