



State and Federal Updates

September 9, 2026



UTAH
SYSTEM OF
HIGHER
EDUCATION

State Updates

August Legislative Interim Session

Higher Education Appropriations Subcommittee

Information Items	Action Items
HB 373 (2026 GS): Update on administration of the Higher Education Research Funding Pilot Program ¹	HB 265 (2025 GS): HEAS determined year two degree-granting institutional strategic reinvestment plans were compliant with statutory requirements and forwarded the plans to the Executive Appropriations Committee (EAC) for consideration
HB 352 (2026 GS): Update on the regional framework for System realignment ² Accountable Budget Process: Institutional Support <i>(Office of the Legislative Fiscal Analyst)</i> Overview of capital projects requests and prioritization process	Requested changes to previously-approved capital projects (HEAS accepted all): • University of Utah: Redwood Clinic (new clinic site vs. expansion of current site) • Utah State University: Residence hall (location change) • Utah Valley University: Student Athlete Success Center and Saela Building (purchase vs. new build)

1. HB 373 update was also presented in August 19 Economic Development and Workforce Services Interim Committee meeting

2. HB 352 update was also presented in August 19 Education Interim Committee meeting

Other Interim Items

Education Interim: The committee heard **A Performance Audit of Enrollment Fraud in Higher Education**; Commissioner Landward outlined agency responses and progress on audit recommendations.

Federal Updates

Federal Student Loan Borrowing Limits

Timeline and updates

2025: H.R. 1 (One Big Beautiful Bill Act) established new borrowing limits for federal student loans for post-baccalaureate programs:

	Annual Limit	Aggregate Limit
Graduate	\$20,500	\$100,000
Professional:	\$50,000	\$200,000

May 2026: Negotiated rulemaking resulted in the Department of Education issuing a list of programs defined as “professional” or “graduate”

June 2026: A federal district judge issued a preliminary stay on the “professional degree” definition

July 2026: Department of Education released an updated list of programs in response to preliminary stay

Programs moved from “graduate” to “professional” under interim list:

- PsyD programs (Psychology programs including Counseling, School, Child Clinical, Health/Medical, Family, Forensic, and other Clinical/Counseling/Applied Psychology)
- Audiology (AuD)
- Speech Language Pathology (SLP)
- Anesthesiologist Assistant (CAA)
- Physician Assistant/Associate (MSPA/PA)
- Athletic Training (MSAT/MAT)
- Occupational Therapy (OT/MSOT/OTD)
- Physical Therapy (PT/DPT)
- Registered Nursing (MSN)
- Nurse Anesthesia (DNAP)
- Nursing Practice (DNP)

Protect College Sports Act

Sen. Ted Cruz (R-TX), Seven Bipartisan Cosponsors

Timeline and progress:

- **June 2:** Bill introduced
- **June 18:** Senate Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation (Commerce Committee) approved (19-9)
- **August 4:** Senate Commerce Committee released revised text
- **August 5:** Senate Majority Leader filed cloture on the motion to proceed to the bill (formally positions for floor consideration)
- **August 8 – September 13:** Senate August recess

Protect College Sports Act

Non-exhaustive summary of major provisions

Area	Summary
Name, Image, Likeness (NIL)	• Certification requirements for entities (multimedia rights holders, apparel companies, vendors, etc.) • Disclosure of NIL agreements over \$600
Revenue sharing	• \$21.3M annual hard cap (inflation adjusted, associate-entity arrangements included) + • \$22.5M retention allowance + • Additional \$5M additional retention allowance unlocked by dollar-for-dollar spending on women's and Olympic sports
Eligibility and transfer	• five-year eligibility window • Allows for one-time transfer without losing playing eligibility
Professional representation	• Fees capped at 5% of endorsement contract value • Agent must register in state, requires creation of a registry of certified agents • Creates private right of action for student-athletes against certain agent violations

Protect College Sports Act

Non-exhaustive summary of major provisions

Area	Summary
Recruiting	Limits recruiting to predictable, sport-specific windows
Scholarships and other benefits and protections	- Cannot restrict scholarships based on performance, injury, roster change, NIL - Extends post-eligibility medical coverage to five years for related injury or illness
Coaching	Prohibits Football Bowl Subdivision (FBS) head coach or coordinator who leaves during a season from assuming similar duties at another institution during the same season
Conferences	- Bars any conference with more than \$700 million annual revenue from consolidating with another conference 19 institution cap on covered conferences - Five-year independence period to restrict changing conferences
Media rights	Allows voluntarily pooling or collectively negotiating media rights

National Call to Action

- US Education Secretary McMahon issued “A National Call to Action to University Presidents and Governing Boards” on August 3.
- Calls on every U.S. higher education institution to, by the end of 2026, post prominently on the institution’s website statements of principle “describing to the American public [the institution’s] commitments to rigorous teaching, pathbreaking research, and national service”, specifically outlining how the institution is addressing the following seven categories through adopted and planned reforms.

(see next slide)

National Call to Action: Questions

Admissions:

“How will your institution ensure that admissions criteria are transparent and wholly described to prospective applicants? And how will your institution ensure admissions decisions are based on merit, achievement, and your university’s educational purpose?”

Debate and discourse:

“How will your institution protect the free exchange of ideas, wide-ranging debate, and open-minded campus discourse? And how will you guarantee that unruly and violent protestors do not harass students or disrupt classes, research, public lectures, and campus operations?”

Intellectual pluralism:

“How will your institution encourage intellectual pluralism in all its academic units? How will your faculty hiring and evaluation practices support academic vitality and ensure that all relevant perspectives are taken seriously? And how will your school ensure the research enterprise is dedicated to advancing knowledge, deepening understanding, and serving the American people who fund it?”

Affordability and value:

“How will your institution ensure that families can access affordable, high-return degrees? What can your school do to contain costs, improve pricing transparency, and ensure that every academic program equips students to repay their loans?”

Teaching and learning in the context of AI:

“How will your institution incentivize rigor in the age of AI, combat grade inflation, and prioritize excellence in teaching and learning?”

Foreign influence in academic education and research:

“How will your school protect academic programs from foreign influence and safeguard the integrity of the research enterprise?”

Supporting the U.S.:

“How will your institution answer this national call to action? How can your campus and faculty advance American security interests, deliver academic programs that meet urgent workforce needs, and contribute materially to the nation’s prosperity?”

National Call to Action: Utah Examples

Admissions:

- Open admissions at 14 USHE institutions
- Competitive admissions at 2 institutions based on qualifications
- Initiatives to simplify admissions

Debate and discourse:

- Resolution Establishing Expectations for Implementing Principles of Free Expression on Campus
- MOU with Interfaith America: Utah Cooperation Cohort
- Various institutional centers, programs, and partnerships

Intellectual pluralism:

- Utah law already defines certain “prohibited discriminatory practices” at USHE institutions, including in hiring and employment

Affordability and value:

- “Value” as Strategic Plan priority, including tactics around tuition and fees, shared services, etc.
- Strategic Reinvestment
- System Redesign
- Performance Funding

Teaching and learning in the context of AI:

- AI Task Force

Foreign influence in academic education and research:

- Existing Utah law prohibits funding support from certain restricted foreign entities and requires disclosure of certain foreign gifts

Supporting the U.S.:

- Education and research contribute to Utah thriving
- Academic programs and government and industry partnerships that support national security
- ROTC