

***RESOLUTION TO ADVANCE EQUITABLE SYSTEMIC CHANGE WITHIN
THE UTAH SYSTEM OF HIGHER EDUCATION***

WHEREAS, recent racial and social justice movements around the globe have amplified calls to evaluate, reform, and eradicate systemic racism and structural equity disparities; and

WHEREAS, Utah continues to see significant gaps in postsecondary enrollment and completion by race, ethnicity, gender, and socioeconomic status; and

WHEREAS, without a critical examination of System policies, procedures, and structures, these gaps will grow over time, resulting in Utah community members missing out on earning thousands of transformative higher education credentials in coming decades; and

WHEREAS, the Utah Board of Higher Education recognizes that underrepresented student groups face intractable structural barriers as they work to access, persist, and complete higher education; and

WHEREAS, the Utah Board of Higher Education is committed to joining with all 16 public higher education institutions across the state to intervene in widening higher education enrollment and completion disparities for underrepresented students; and

WHEREAS, the Board recognizes that intervening in systemic disparities requires issues of equity, diversity, inclusion, and student safety be at the forefront of all its work; and

WHEREAS, the Board acknowledges its position and responsibility to continue facilitating dialogue and coordinated actions between state leaders, education leaders, researchers, and industry experts to eliminate educational equity gaps and to ensure all Utahns can access and complete higher education;

THEREFORE, the Utah Board of Higher Education resolves to advance equitable systemic change through the following priorities:

1. Establish a diversity, equity, and inclusion workgroup to cultivate collaboration and coordination among the Board and System leadership. The workgroup members shall include the Board executive committee, the Commissioner and his staff, institutional representatives, and community organizations. The workgroup will meet quarterly, starting in September, to update its members on each standing committee's progress toward statewide goals and to align ongoing efforts to advance equitable systemic change. Additionally, the workgroup will be responsible for creating opportunities to hear from underrepresented students and communities to guide its work.
2. Create an equity lens framework for higher education leaders, in collaboration with institutional Chief Diversity Officers, community leaders, and System leadership, to better understand, identify, and address systemic equity issues as they establish priorities, set goals, revise System policies, and govern the Utah System of Higher Education. A draft of this document will be shared at the October Board meeting.
3. Ensure statewide attainment and performance goals include measures designed to close statewide inequities and are part of the System strategic plan. By the November 20 Board meeting, each standing committee will develop a set of aligned priorities, specific to their assigned areas of responsibility, that are equity-driven, measurable, and focused on creating meaningful progress toward removing statewide inequities.

Dated this 21st day of August 2020.


Harris H. Simmons, Chair
Utah Board of Higher Education




Dave R. Woolstenhulme
Commissioner of Higher Education