

Equity in Opportunity & Resources Initiative

Proposal by President Kum, President Siaki, and President Corbett

Why Equity?

We live in a world, nation, and state where too often people are not treated fairly or justly. We see evidence of systemic barriers and the effect that they have on all types of communities, especially in the realm of higher education. We believe that as a USA Board representing all students in Utah, we have the capacity, and obligation to address these barriers, especially in regards racial/ethnic, socioeconomic, and health inequities.

Racial & Ethnic Equity

Statewide Goal: Declaring Racism a Public Health Crisis

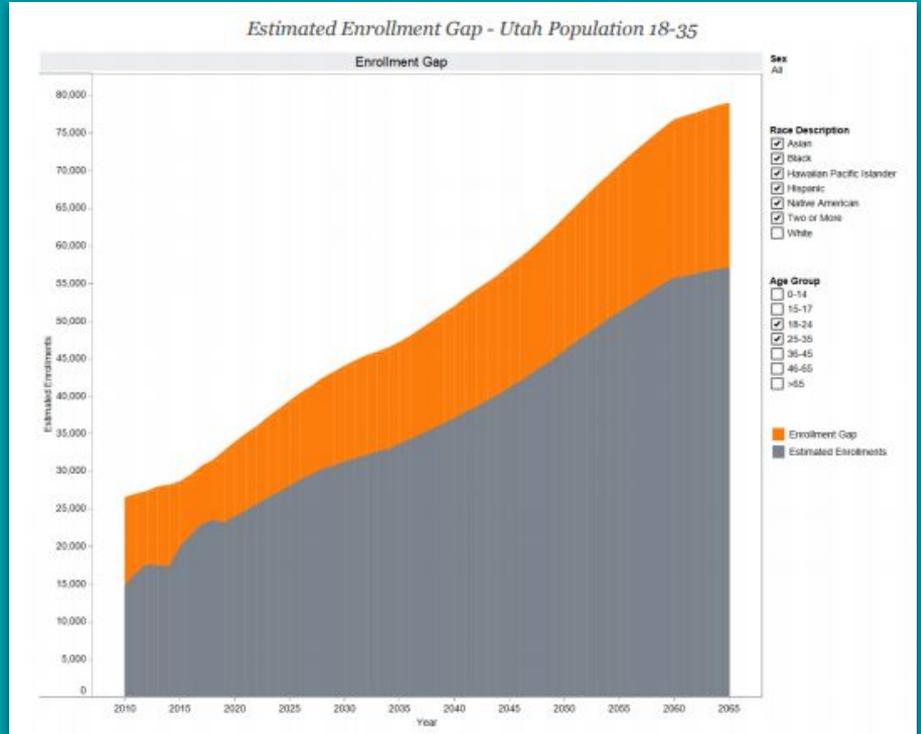
Description: The goal would be to work with our state legislature to pass a joint resolution that would declare racism a public health crisis in Utah, similar to how last year's USA Board advocated for declaring Mental Health a public health crisis.

Rationale: Not only is there an existing path to success with declarations as paved by our predecessors, but there is even an existing resolution to help propel forward that was recently created by students at the University of Utah.

In addition, public health crisis declarations are crucial for elevating the conversation, and lead to special attention and increased resources being devoted.

Percent of state population (18-35) enrolled at a USHE institution, 2018

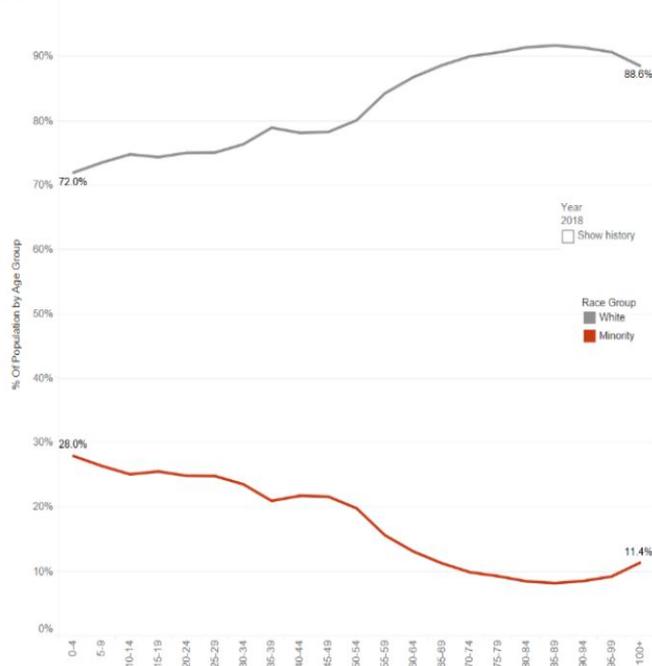
Race/Ethnicity	Ages 18-35		
	Female	Male	Total
White	14.56%	15.61%	15.09%
Hispanic	10.45%	8.72%	9.59%
Asian	13.43%	13.01%	13.22%
Black	14.57%	11.43%	13.00%
Hawaiian/Pacific Islander	8.48%	9.74%	9.11%
Native American	10.98%	8.52%	9.75%
Two or More	14.66%	14.87%	14.76%
Total Average	12.45%	11.70%	12.07%



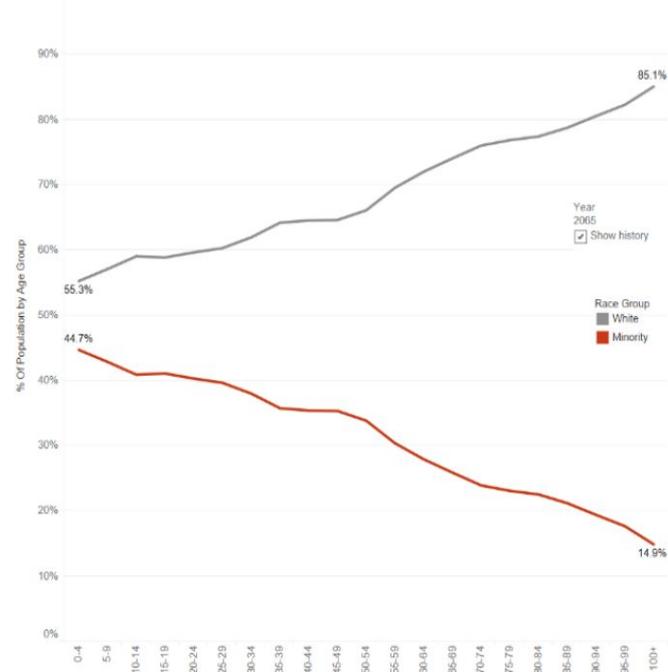
Population trends of Utahns ages 18-35



Racial Share of Population by Age Group



Racial Share of Population by Age Group



Potential Institution Goals:

- For schools who do not currently have one, let's get Diversity, Equity, & Inclusion Action Plans at all USA institutions.
 - These plans should and can include pieces such as plans for adjustments in hiring and retention of diverse faculty/staff, and establishing Anti-Racism Task Forces.
- Let us also explore ramping up our hate speech policies and lower our institutional tolerances for language that racist or discriminatory in nature

Socioeconomic Equity

Statewide Goal: A Statewide Campaign on Financial Transparency & Resources

Description: The goal is to collaborate as a USA Board to address socioeconomic inequity by starting a statewide campaign, creating a directory for scholarships & other financial resources on the Utah Student Association Website. In addition, the plan is to develop, produce & distribute a series of videos/infographics explaining the student fee allocation process, as well as detailing where fees are being spent at each institution to address student concern.

Rationale: This promotes transparency and creates access to information in higher education throughout the state of Utah.

Potential Institution Goals:

- Collaborate to set standards for student food pantries at institutions throughout the state of Utah.
- Provide updates on CARES Act Higher Education Emergency Relief Funds to ensure students have the resources necessary to succeed academically online (Electronic materials, access to internet, etc.).
- Provide transportation for students to vote in upcoming elections, or work to allow institutions to become designated polling places.
- Develop free FAFSA & scholarship application workshops for students unfamiliar with these processes.

Health

Equity

Statewide Goal: Lobbying for more Health Professionals on Campuses

Description: The overarching goal of health equity will focus on securing funding for more mental health counselors on all USA campuses by lobbying throughout the semester and on Higher Ed day.

Rationale: As the state has declared mental health a public health crisis already, we now have more grounds to demand that action be taken to give all students access to psychologists, psychiatrists, and crisis counselors.

The American School Counselor Association recommends one counselor per 250 students. All of the universities and colleges participating in this board have a ratio of 1000+ to 1.

Want to see a college counselor? Get in line

National standards recommend that colleges have one therapist per 1,000 to 1,500 students available for counseling services. At Utah universities, the vast majority of schools do not meet that benchmark.

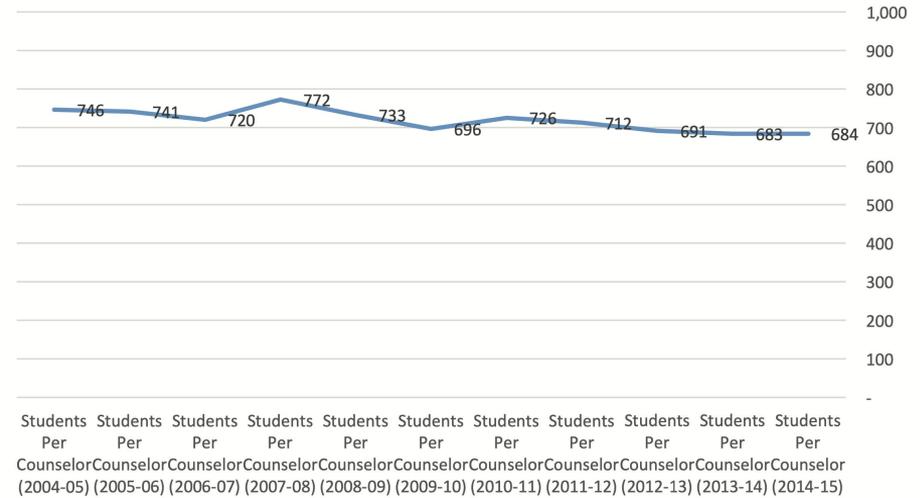
	Westminster College	BYU	Southern Utah Univ.	Snow College	Weber State	Utah State	Dixie State	Univ. of Utah	Utah Valley	Salt Lake CC
Number of counselors	3	29	7.5	2.5	9.25	7.5	4	12.25	7	3.25
Number of students*	2,800	33,000	9,300	3,500	18,600	16,000	8,993	32,000	35,000	30,000
1 counselor per number of students <small>(each student figure represents 100 students)</small>	 930	 1,000	 1,240	 1,400	 2,011	 2,133	 2,248	 2,617	 4,997	 9,200
Wait time	One day to a few weeks	three to four weeks fall/winter	About two weeks	15 days	One to three weeks	Three to four weeks (30% are referred out)	Usually 24 to 48 hours	8.9 days	Several weeks	Less than two weeks

Source: Tribune reporting

*Fall 2016 enrollment; Weber State and Snow College reflect smaller than full enrollment

GRAPHIC BY TODD ADAMS | The Salt Lake Tribune

Utah Student-to-Counselor Ratio, 2004-05 to 2014-15



Students Per Counselor (2004-05) Students Per Counselor (2005-06) Students Per Counselor (2006-07) Students Per Counselor (2007-08) Students Per Counselor (2008-09) Students Per Counselor (2009-10) Students Per Counselor (2010-11) Students Per Counselor (2011-12) Students Per Counselor (2012-13) Students Per Counselor (2013-14) Students Per Counselor (2014-15)

Potential Institution Goals:

- Allocating student fee monies to health and wellness programs. If administration won't prioritize this funding, we as student leaders must.
- Working to create policies protecting students on study abroad trips and in off-campus housing from other students/faculty/staff in the case of sexual harassment. (As these are areas no longer protected by Title IX)
- Providing resource pamphlets with affordable community health resources (vaccinations, medications, physicals, counseling) for each geographic area our schools lie within.
- Having hard talks about mental health via webinars, campaigns, videos, town halls with administration, etc.

Closing Remarks

Fellow Presidents,

We urge you to join us in pursuing this goal of making higher education in Utah a more equitable space for all students. The structure of this initiative was made with your passions and hopes in mind. We believe that this structure will enable us to work in effective subcommittees and build off of each other.

There is already momentum that we can push forward from, as the Utah Board of Higher Education has declared their own commitment to achieving equity. Not to mention with each idea, there are already existing connections and potential partners.

The only question that remains is: will you join this ever growing movement for change and begin to address the most pervasive challenges that our students face?

<https://www.schoolcounselor.org/asca/media/asca/Publications/ratioreport.pdf>

<https://www.sttrib.com/news/education/2017/03/07/struggling-students-forced-to-wait-as-utahs-public-colleges-dont-have-enough-therapists/>

https://ushe.edu/wp-content/uploads/pdf/reports/issue_brief/2020/2020_Aug_opportunity-gap-IB.pdf

Sources