

Fiscal Highlights

Higher Education Appropriations Subcommittee Meets - Spencer C. Pratt

The Higher Education Appropriations Subcommittee met for its second meeting of the 2013 interim on October 11, 2013 at Dixie State University in St. George. The subcommittee met in the new Holland Centennial Commons building, followed by tours of Dixie State University and Dixie Applied Technology College.

The subcommittee heard from the Utah College of Applied Technology (UCAT) about equity issues, which reflects uneven funding when the eight campuses are compared. A request for equity funding, approved by the UCAT Board of Trustees will be forwarded to the Legislature.

A report was also presented looking at cost comparisons for career and technical education (CTE) between UCAT campuses and Utah System of Higher Education (USHE) institutions that provide CTE. Costs for CTE are generally lower at UCAT campuses than at USHE campuses, for a variety of reasons. Beyond the cost comparison, it was noted that the cooperation and collaboration between UCAT and USHE has improved significantly over the past several years, with partnerships and pathways for students to receive USHE credit for UCAT hours, when they move into the USHE system.

Commissioner Buhler gave an update on New Century and Regents' Scholarships. The number of New Century Scholarships awarded has leveled off over the past several years, following amendments to the legislation. The number of Regents' Scholarships awarded has increased significantly over the past few years.

The Commissioner also reviewed the five initiatives approved by the Board of Regents, which include (1) Full-time means 15 student credit hours, (2) Increasing pass rate in developmental math, (3) graduation maps, (4) stackable/reverse credentials, and (5) tuition plateaus.

The subcommittee received a report showing the number of graduate students at each of the five USHE institutions, by discipline. The disciplines with the highest number of students are Health Professions, Business, and Education. The data was shown for both resident and nonresident student for 2008 through 2012.

Commissioner Buhler showed summary data collected by the Utah Data Alliance, which is a cooperative between the Utah State Office of Education, the Utah System of Higher Education, the Utah College of Applied Technology, the Utah Education Network,, and the Utah Department of Workforce Services. The data shows that first-year wage data is higher for those with 1- and 2-year certificates than those with associate's or bachelor's degrees. Over the long term, the data shows that the higher the degree, the higher the overall salary.

Utah Academic Library Consortium (UALC) Chair Daphne Selbert discussed how the UALC works, its benefits to students, and how it saves the state money by purchasing items - especially databases - just once, but allowing access to that information to students throughout the state.

Snow President Scott Wyatt and Beaver School District Superintendent Ray Terry discussed the need for rural high school students to have access to general education courses through concurrent enrollment. A bill will be before the Legislature in 2014 to address this issue.

The Fiscal Note/Building Block Follow-up Report was shown to the subcommittee, with emphasis placed on the higher education items. Angela Oh briefly went over the items, explaining the stoplights.

Members of the subcommittee then went on a tour of Dixie State University followed by a tour of Dixie Applied Technology College.