

Fiscal Highlights

Higher Education Reports on Equity and Mission Based Funding - Spencer C. Pratt

During the August meeting of the Executive Appropriations Committee, Commissioner Dave Buhler, Utah System of Higher Education, reported on how funding from two appropriations made during the 2014 General Session has been used. For FY 2015, the Legislature approved \$50 million for Equity and \$7 million for Distinctive Mission Based Funding.

Equity funding was targeted at five institutions that have experienced a significant increase in the number of students over the past decade, but without corresponding funding increases. Because of this growth, Utah Valley University, Salt Lake Community College, Utah State University - Regional Campuses, Dixie State University, and Weber State University all received a portion of the \$50 million appropriation which moved them closer to 90 percent of the average of national peer institutions. Since most expenditures in higher education are personnel-related, most of the funding will be to hire new faculty to alleviate bottleneck courses in general education and high-demand programs. Course offerings will be expanded online, as well as during evenings, weekends, and advising. Commissioner Buhler referenced a handout detailing specific plans by each institution showing proposed spending of equity funding.

The \$7 million Distinctive Mission Based funding was implemented by institutions to support the State Board of Regents' strategic goals of increasing participation, completion, and economic development through promoting each institution's specific mission. A detailed plan was presented which showed how each of the eight Utah System of Higher Education institutions and the State Board of Regents would utilize the Mission Based Funding.

A request was made for an update of the \$9 million for Performance Based Funding approved during the 2015 General Session. Commissioner Buhler told the Committee that the Board of Regents had recently approved the funding model and allocations and he would be prepared to present the model and an update to the Committee at an upcoming meeting.