REPORT TO THE

UTAH LEGISLATURE

Report No. 99-06

A Performance Audit

of

Higher Education Operational Statistics

September 1999

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Digest of
A Performance Audit of
USHE Operational Statistics

This audit was initiated to provide data on the number of higher education employees and the amount of work they perform. The Utah System of Higher Education (USHE) Employee Count Report reported 22,700 full-time equivalent (FTE) employees in fall 1998. The 1998 report is a fairly accurate employee count, with improvements over the first employee count in 1997. There are still some inaccuracies, mainly in categorization of employees within the report.

Limited formal workload measurement is done in the USHE. More data are available on faculty workloads than on non-instructional workloads; Utah's professors carry similar workloads to those in other states. There are more non-instructional than instructional staff in the USHE, a pattern similar to staffing elsewhere. However, little information exists in higher education or anywhere else regarding workload measurement for the non-instructional employees.

The first chapter presents some background information on performance measurement and accountability in higher education. Interest in higher education accountability is high in Utah and across the nation.

- The present focus appears to be shifting from input and process measurement to outcome and performance measures such as graduation rates and professional certification pass rates.

- The Utah State Board of Regents (SBR) has identified four performance indicators that could be tied to funding. Also, 12 system-wide performance indicators (not tied to funding) have been proposed, as have 18 institution-level indicators.

Remaining chapters in the report deal with the following areas:

The USHE Employee Count Report Is Improving. The Utah System of Higher Education Employee Count Report (S-12) gives a fairly accurate summary of the number of employees, citing a system-wide total of 22,700 FTE employees for 1998. The report has undergone several changes in two years— improving the instructions and revising the format for greater clarity. However, improvements are

still needed, particularly to increase the consistency of report preparation among institutions.

Recommendations:

1. We recommend that the SBR take further steps to ensure institutions are consistent in the use of instructions and slotting employees into job classes when compiling the USHE Employee Count Report.

2. We recommend that the SBR discuss the options of basing the Employee Count Report on point-in-time vs. year-end data with the Legislature so the Legislature can decide which data set best meets its needs.

3. We recommend that the University of Utah, along with the SBR, revisit the way "exact pay" employees are counted (or not) for report purposes once their new personnel data system is fully operational.

Faculty Workload Data Show More Instruction. Faculty workload data within the USHE reflect that professors and instructors are spending more time in instruction-related activities when compared to instructors at peer institutions and national averages. USHE faculty carry an equal or greater credit load compared to their peers and devote a higher percentage of time to instruction. In addition, most USHE institutions comply with the credit load policy implemented by the Board of Regents. The following points illustrate the USHE's focus on instruction:

- Sampled USHE institutions' faculty teach a higher credit load than selected peers and national category averages for like institutions.

- The SBR has implemented Policy 485 requiring professors to teach average minimum credit loads. Compliance with this policy needs some improvement: USHE's four-year institutions meet the requirements, while three of the five two-year institutions taught less than the required credit load in 1997-98.

- USHE faculty's overall workload percentages differ from national averages. Sampled institutions in the USHE dedicate a higher percentage of time to all instructional activities, while spending less time in research when compared to national data.

Recommendations:

1. We recommend that the Board of Regents continue to monitor compliance with Policy 485 on institutional teaching workload.

2. We recommend that the Legislature determine whether the SBR should continue to survey faculty for research and service activity data.

3. If the faculty activity survey is continued, we recommend that the Board of Regents and institutions decide whether to report faculty activity data in hours or percentages, and then to be consistent in using the method agreed upon.

Non-Instructional Staff Workload Measures Are Few.

Little workload measurement has been done on non-instructional employees in higher education. The lack of workload measures for non-instructional staff made it necessary for us to look at USHE staffing patterns (i.e., employees by type) compared to staffing in institutions elsewhere.

This chapter includes sections on the following:

- Staffing patterns in the USHE and other states show that higher education institutions typically have more non-instructional than instructional staff.

- Workload and staffing decisions hinge on managerial assessment of needs and availability of funds.

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Chapter I
Introduction

This audit was initiated to address a legislative request for data on the number of higher education employees and the amount of work they perform. Some of these data exist in basic form but can improve. The Utah System of Higher Education (USHE) Employee Count Report presents a reasonable summary of the number of employees in each institution as well as system-wide. With all employees presented as a full-time equivalent (FTE) count, the State Board of Regents (SBR) reported 22,700 employees in fall 1998. The 1998 Employee Count Report, while improved over the first employee count report in 1997, still has some inaccuracies, mainly in categorization of employees within the report.

While employee count information is available, detailed information on what work is being done (workload measurement) by USHE staff is not. Limited formal workload measurement is done in the USHE. Because of national interest, more data are available on faculty workloads than on non-instructional workloads. Utah's professors carry similar workloads to those in other states. There are more non-instructional than instructional staff in the USHE, a similar pattern to staffing elsewhere. However, little information exists regarding workload measurement for the non-instructional employees.

This chapter provides some background for the discussion in the rest of the report:

- The USHE is composed of nine institutions of varying missions, size, and enrollment. The institutions operate independently, which complicates response to requests for information at a system-wide level.

- Accountability, workload issues, performance and/or outcome measurement are local and national issues in the higher education community, with performance indicators in use or under development in many states.

Differing Missions Make Some Comparisons Difficult

The USHE is comprised of different types of institutions. The variety of missions and other characteristics complicates comparisons within the USHE.

For example, the University of Utah (U of U) and Utah State University (USU) are research institutions, offering four-year undergraduate degrees and advanced degrees through the doctorate level. They are classified as Research Universities I by the Carnegie Foundation for the Advancement of Teaching. (This foundation developed a classification system for institutions of higher education primarily based on mission, not size or quality.)

USHE institutions have a variety of missions with differing emphases.

Weber State University (WSU) and Southern Utah University (SUU) are classified by the Carnegie Foundation as Masters' (Comprehensive) Universities I. These institutions offer primarily two- and four-year degrees, with selected programs through the master's level. The SBR categorizes WSU and SUU as regional, comprehensive institutions with service and cultural programs for the area in which they are sited.

There are five two-year colleges. These schools offer both terminal degrees in career-oriented areas and general and liberal education as preparation for continuing on to a bachelor's degree elsewhere. Salt Lake Community College (SLCC) and Utah Valley State College (UVSC) are located in urban areas; while Dixie College, Snow College, and the College of Eastern Utah (CEU) are small-town schools. The Carnegie Foundation classifies these schools as Associate of Arts Colleges. However, in addition to two-year programs, UVSC offers a number of bachelor degree programs, differentiating it in some ways from the two-year colleges.

The institutions act independently and do not coordinate information technology and other systems.

While the institutions form the state's system of higher education, they operate independently in many ways. As mentioned, missions vary. Each has a local Board of Trustees. In addition, day-to-day operations are fairly autonomous. For example, each has developed its own computer information system and the schools do not all use the same reporting formats. This diversity complicates response to information requests that require aggregation of data at a system level.

The first Employee Count Report caused concern in the Legislature when data variances were seen between schools.

In early 1998, the USHE compiled an Employee Count (S-12) report enumerating total employees as of October 1997. Data collection and report preparation were done in a short time frame so that the SBR could report to the

Legislature before the end of the 1998 Session. Staff at the SBR and institutions who worked on the report agree that minimal instruction and guidance were provided to the institutions other than a template of data categories.

The resulting report raised some concerns about seeming disparities among the institutions. For example, the number of executives listed by a two-year college was higher than that given by a larger, more complex research institution. This and other data discrepancies raised questions about whether the institutions used consistent report preparation procedures. These accuracy issues will be addressed in Chapter II.

Higher Education Accountability Is a National and Local Issue

Utah legislators' interest in the USHE mirrors increasing interest in higher education accountability across the nation. As the cost of higher education has increased and tuition rates have climbed faster than the rate of inflation, questions have been asked about higher education's performance. Several researchers have commented that this interest is not likely to dissipate, and, therefore, institutions would do well to participate actively in the development and implementation of performance measures.

Demands for accountability are increasing. Performance measures tell how well our institutions achieve their missions.

Our research on accountability issues found that both process measurement (e.g., hours worked by faculty, number of classes offered) and outcome measurement (graduation rates, graduates' satisfaction with their education) have been discussed and attempted in higher education. The present focus appears to be shifting from input and process measurement to outcome and performance measures such as graduation rates and professional certification pass rates. Some professionals assert that learning, one of the most important and difficult outcomes to measure, has not been measured but needs to be. The question for Utah and other states' institutions then becomes not how much are we doing, but how well are we doing it?

Performance Indicators Are Widely Used Nationally

As of 1997, 37 states used performance measures for higher education accountability.

In a 1996-1997 survey, 37 states reported that they use performance measures, most often to provide accountability. The study (published in a 1998 report by the State Higher Education Executive Officers association or SHEEO), stated that "during this decade, there have been increasing demands for higher education to be more responsive to state concerns and more publicly accountable to its large number of constituents..." Performance indicators, then, are often measures that assist other parties in evaluating higher education from outside the system.

Two main uses of performance indicators are given in SHEEO's report:

- To provide information to consumers (students and parents) as well as to the government;

- To use the indicators either directly or indirectly in the budgetary process.

SHEEO authors indicate that demands for accountability "...are driven in large part by rising costs for attending college, increasing demands for access, and decreased state resources for higher education." The report presents the twelve most commonly reported performance measures as listed in the following figure.

Figure I. States' Performance Measures. These measures are a mix of performance, productivity, output, and outcome.

Most Commonly Reported Performance Measures	Number of States
Graduation rates*	32
Transfer rates*	25
Faculty workload/productivity*	24
Follow-up satisfaction studies	23
External/sponsored research funds	23
Remediation activities/effectiveness	21
Pass rates on licensure exams*	21
Degrees awarded	20
Placement data on graduates	19
Admission standards and measures	18
Total student credit hours	18
Number & percentage of accredited programs	13

* ***As will be discussed, the USHE has proposed the use of indicators similar to these which could be directly tied to the budget process.***

Having gained a sense of the performance indicators in use nationally, a look at nearby states and Utah found indicators in use locally as well.

Nearby States Report Using Performance Indicators

5 of 6 nearby states use performance indicators, mostly to measure processes and productivity.

The interest in greater accountability could result in the measurement of either processes, outcomes, or both. Five of six neighboring states have put performance indicators in place, the majority of which are process and productivity-oriented. The number of indicators in use varies widely, as seen in Figure II, ranging from none to 88.

Figure II. Most Nearby States Have Performance Indicators. The number of indicators in place ranges widely. Most use a combination of productivity and outcome indicators.

State Agency Contacted	Number of Measures
Arizona Board of Regents	88
Colorado Commission on Higher Education	9*
Idaho State Board of Regents	11
Montana University System	0
University & College System of Nevada	19
Wyoming Community College Commission	12
Utah State Board of Regents	16**

****** Colorado's governing boards have proposed 101 additional measures for the institutions.*

******* Utah has adopted 4 indicators that could be tied to funding and 12 additional system-level indicators; 18 school-level indicators are under development at the institutions.*

None of the nearby states tie their performance indicators to funding at present. A major purpose of gathering the data is to provide accountability. Several officials said reports will go to the governor and Legislature, as well as to the state-level governing or coordinating agency. Some officials also mentioned their institutions will use the data for internal assessment and improvement.

USHE Is Also Developing Performance Indicators

USHE has identified 4 indicators that could be budget-related, plus 12 others that would not be tied to funding.

In Utah, as in nearby states, the system of higher education is working on performance measurement. The SBR has recently identified four performance indicators that could be tied to funding. In addition, 12 system-wide performance indicators that would not be tied to funding have been proposed, as have 18 institution-level indicators.

Even prior to the development of the budget-related performance indicators, the USHE issued biennial assessment and accountability reports on the system's performance. In addition, a faculty activity survey that has been used in the past was completed again in 1998. The SBR has further proposed a program to test student learning at the end of the sophomore year or at the degree point for those in one or two-year programs. A pilot program is scheduled for this coming year.

Utah's budget-related indicators look at certification exam pass rates, graduation rates, and faculty contact hours.

In Mid-1998, an SBR Master Planning Task Force Reported on Four Performance Indicators That Could Be Meaningfully Tied to Funding. The report connects the budget-related indicators to three areas of emphasis "...that are central to the mission of the USHE...." These emphases are instructional quality and student learning; retention, transfer and graduation; and faculty workload. The budget-related indicators were defined in the report as follows:

- Increase in the number and proportion of students who pass norm-referenced licensure and other examinations with higher scores than the average score currently earned by USHE students.
- Average credits to graduate divided by total credits required.
- Average credits to graduate for transfer students divided by average credits to graduate for a native student.
- Average weekly teaching contact hours per full-time faculty divided by Regent-approved standard weekly teaching contact hour load.

The USHE's objectives for these indicators are similar to those frequently reported across the nation. Improving institutional performance or undergraduate education and increasing institutional accountability were the objectives listed by most states in the SHEEO report. Other reported objectives for using performance measures include providing information for the budget process, rewarding institutions for high performance, and keeping constituents informed.

The task force report did not propose a methodology for tying the indicators to funding, but stated the intent to develop a mechanism to do so. According to SBR staff, the Legislature has requested that a funding proposal be presented to the Legislature by December 1999.

12 additional system-wide measures have been formally adopted, and 18 school-specific measures are being developed.

Two Sets of Non-budget Related Measures Have Been Proposed as Well. In addition to the four budget-related performance indicators, the master planning task force identified 12 additional performance measures which relate to the same areas of emphasis as the budget-related indicators. A list of these measures can be found in the Appendix. Each USHE institution also identified two performance indicators to measure. The specific measures have been under development and refinement at most of the institutions, with the base year for measurement to be 1998-99 for all institutions except USU, which will use 1999-00 as its base year. The first comparison year would then be either

1999-00 or 2000-01. These proposed indicators are also listed in the Appendix.

Scope and Objectives

In response to a request from joint majority leadership, we reviewed staffing and workload issues in Utah's higher education system primarily at three institutions. These schools were chosen to provide a variety of missions:

- The University of Utah (U of U), classified by the Carnegie Foundation as a Research University I;
- Weber State University (WSU), a Carnegie Master's I or Comprehensive University;
- Utah Valley State College (UVSC), a Carnegie Associate of Arts College.

On selected issues, we were able to obtain information from each of the nine institutions in Utah's system. We interviewed administrators and staff at the sampled institutions, obtained data from the schools and from the Board of Regents staff as needed, and contacted a number of peer institutions for each of the sampled Utah schools to ask about staffing and workload issues.

In addition, we obtained and reviewed national data on higher education from the US Department of Education's National Center for Education Statistics (NCES). We also conducted background research in libraries and over the Internet on various topics in higher education staffing and accountability areas.

Specifically, our objectives were the following:

- To determine the sufficiency and accuracy level of, and any needed modifications to, the Employee Count Report (S-12) submitted by the institutions of higher education.

- To determine whether the USHE has workload measures in place for instructional employees; and, if so, what those measures are.

- To determine whether the USHE has workload measures in place for non-instructional employees; and, if so, what those measures are. In addition, to assess the validity of a complaint of inefficiency in custodial operations at the U of U. During the audit, the complainant modified his initial allegation, and sufficient internal controls were found to be in place in Operations and Maintenance to reveal work anomalies, so this area was not pursued.

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Chapter II
Employee Count Report Is Improving

The Utah System of Higher Education (USHE) Employee Count Report (S-12) gives a fairly accurate summary of the number of employees, citing a system-wide total of 22,700 full-time equivalent (FTE) employees for 1998. The report has undergone several changes in two years that improved the instructions and revised the format for greater clarity. However, improvements are still needed, particularly to increase the consistency of report preparation among institutions.

This chapter notes that:

The Employee Count Report is a good employee summary, with improvements over last year. A few changes can improve it more.

- The Employee Count Report provides an adequate summary of the number of USHE employees.
- Implemented changes to the Employee Count Report should improve consistency of data.
- The report's "snapshot" or point-in-time data has limitations; the use of year-end data can be considered. Other changes can reduce remaining inconsistencies in institution-level report preparation.

While the overall totals appear to be reasonably accurate, information within institutions and within employee categories should be reviewed with the report's limits in mind.

During the 1998 Legislative Session, at the Legislature's request, a report on the number of USHE employees as of fall 1997 was developed. Questions arose when data comparisons between institutions found some numbers that seemed inconsistent. For example, Utah State University (USU) reported 12.8 executives while Utah Valley State College (UVSC) reported having 19, though USU is a larger, more complex institution than UVSC.

SBR and institution staff said the report had been put together quickly with few instructions provided to the institutions. The intent was to use existing federally required data and to provide the report to the Legislature before the 1998 session ended. The report's limitations became obvious as its data inaccuracies were noted.

S-12 Report Gives Fairly Accurate

Employee Summary

The 1998 USHE Employee Count reported 22,700 full-time equivalent employees system-wide.

The 1998 Employee Count Report or S-12 provides a fairly good summary of the number of employees in the USHE. To assess the accuracy of the summary information, we compared S-12 report data to department-level personnel records at three Utah institutions. Two of the three institutions had very high correspondence between the departments' personnel records and the report. Initially observed variances between departments and the final report data at the University of Utah (U of U) were easily reconciled.

USHE Employs About 22,700 FTEs

The 1998 Employee Count Report listed 22,696 full-time equivalent (FTE) employees across the system. Figure III shows the number of employees at each USHE institution in early October 1998.

Figure III. USHE Employees in Fall 1998. The number of employees is given as full-time equivalents, not individuals. Institutions are listed from highest to lowest by total FTEs.

USHE Institution	FTE Employees	Percent of Total
University of Utah	11,811	52.0%
Utah State University	3,903	17.2
Weber State University	1,802	7.9
Salt Lake Community College	1,738	7.7
Utah Valley State College	1,414	6.2
Southern Utah University	948	4.2
Dixie College	415	1.8
College of Eastern Utah	334	1.5
Snow College	331	1.5
Total	**22,696**	**100.0%**

The first Employee Count Report, issued in 1997, contained 23,020 full-time equivalent employees, or 1.4 percent higher than 1998's report. Having ascertained that the overall number of employees stayed consistent from the

first to the second year's report, we then reviewed more specific data to assess accuracy within institutions.

Sampled Institutions Had Fairly Accurate Counts

The initial look at U of U data showed some problems that were resolved with further review.

Department-level personnel records corresponded closely to administrative data used to compile the Employee Count at two of three sampled institutions—Weber State University (WSU) and Utah Valley State College (UVSC). Additional review of the somewhat lower correspondence of data at the U of U provided some assurance their count was also reasonably accurate.

The three USHE institutions (accounting for two-thirds of all USHE employees) were chosen to represent the different types of schools in the system: a research institution (U of U); a comprehensive university (WSU); and, a two-year college (UVSC). Since the system-wide Employee Count was generated from centrally held data at each school, we reviewed personnel records at several departments at the three and compared them to Employee Count data to determine how closely the data sets matched.

While there was strong correspondence between the department employment records and report data at WSU and UVSC, variance was initially higher at the U of U. WSU's department records showed a 3 percent variance from the report data; UVSC's department had a 2 percent variance from the report. Because the initial review of sampled departments at the U of U showed a variance of 20 percent for those departments, we focused further work on this institution.

Staff in the university's Governmental Accounting and Internal Audit offices provided payroll data that showed the report's total differed from the actual number of checks issued to all employees by about 210 out of 11,800 employees, or just 1.3 percent university-wide. This information provided some indication that our sample included an unusually high occurrence of variance. Further work provided the following explanations for the differences that appeared in our sample:

- A group of employees classified as "exact pay" were not included in the report data but were disproportionately represented in the sampled departments.
- Six chemistry faculty were not counted because they were in transition between summer and fall term assignments and were not included on the payroll run that was used (an oversight related to the change from quarters to semesters).

- Instructors who received a lump-sum payment at the end of the term would not have appeared in the October payroll data.

- As in any pay period, some hourly employees would be missing from the report data file because they had not turned in their time cards.

Adjusting for the exact pay employees and chemistry faculty lowers the U of U's variance to 9 percent. We did not quantify the number of instructors who were paid in a lump sum or employees who turned in late time cards, but this would lower the variance somewhat further.

Exact pay employees are not working at the U of U permanently and were not included in the Employee Count.

The majority of exact pay employees at the U of U typically teach for a limited time (teaching assistants, visiting professors) or conduct research for a specific project. The exact pay employees were not included in the employee count because of the time-limited nature of their employment. At the U of U, exact pay employees are in a different employee category from permanent employees.

Most of the group termed "exact pay" and not included in the count work in science and engineering areas. Our sample included both chemistry and physics departments, which resulted in a disproportionate variance rate for the sample. Some exact pay employees work in other departments; we found 63 exact pay employees in chemistry and physics, and 11 in marketing and English.

Changes Increased Report's Consistency

Better instructions, clearer definitions, and clarified format improved the second year's process.

After the legislative concerns of the first year, the SBR and the USHE worked to improve the report with the dual intent to ease preparation and increase usefulness. A committee clarified instructions and definitions for the Employee Count Report to increase consistency among institutions. In addition, the report's format was changed with some employee categories combined to ease preparation, and headings changed to correspond to other existing reports' formats.

Instructions and Definitions Improved

Because the first Employee Count Report was developed quickly to respond to a legislative request for information, little in the way of written instructions and definitions were provided by the SBR. During the interim before the 1999 Legislative Session, instructions were expanded, put in written form, and some

definitions clarified to increase consistency among the institutions.

SBR staff indicated the layout and content of the first employee count was informally put together at the direction of the Office of the Fiscal Analyst because there was little time to develop a more thought-out approach. General guidance was given with the hastily created report template, but little in the way of instructions provided other than a cover memo from the SBR. Data in the resulting report were not consistently categorized by the institutions.

For example, some legislators were concerned to see that the first report listed 19 executives at UVSC while USU reported only 12.8. Questions were raised as to what workload measures were in place for executives, or alternately, whether the numbers were inaccurate. In fact, some data changed significantly the second year. When asked to explain why the executive tally changed so much in 1998, institutional administrators responded that changes in the definitions (e.g., defining executive by titles instead of levels removed from the president) caused positions to be categorized differently. USU staff felt the changes were significant enough that the two reports were entirely different things.

The following figure shows the changes in the executive counts from the 1997 to the 1998 report.

Figure IV. Four Institutions' Executive Counts Changed Considerably from 1997 to 1998. Among the reasons for the changes in the number of reported executives was clarification of the term "executive" to achieve consistency.

Institution	1997 Executive	1998 Executive	% Change
U of U	45.6	43.2	(5.3)%
USU	12.8	47.9	273.9
WSU	12.0	47.9	299.2
SUU	13.9	24.9	79.0
Snow College	4.0	4.0	0.0
Dixie College	6.2	13.0	109.7
CEU	9.8	7.0	(28.6)
UVSC	19.0	19.0	0.0
SLCC	11.0	13.0	18.2
USHE Total	134.3	219.8	63.7

While UVSC's executive count remained 19, USU listed 48 executives the second year– a figure that puts its executive total closer to the U of U than to a two-year college. While these numbers seem more reasonable, some concerns remain about consistency. WSU staff indicated their executive count should not have increased the second year, but probably included department chairs or directors. WSU staff explained that this placement was consistent with the database used to generate the report and may have occurred because of time constraints in compiling the report. In the interest of overall consistency, reporting procedures need to be uniform.

Report Format Was Changed to Reflect Budget and Expenditure Classes

In addition to changes in instructions, the Employee Count Report changed significantly in format. Job function categories, as well as employee groupings, changed. Also, the 1998 report was initially split into an FTE and a headcount section; after reviewing a draft of the report, legislative leadership requested the reporting to be only on an FTE basis.

SBR staff received numerous complaints the first year that the Employee Count Report was difficult to complete for a variety of reasons. In the interim between legislative sessions, a report committee refined the format of the report to simplify preparation. The following changes were put in place:

- Instead of 1997's broad headings for Academic, Administrative, Research, and Public Service, the 1998 report used National Association of College and University Business Officials (NACUBO) functional categories already in use at the institutions, making it easier to classify employees based on function.

- While the 1997 report included 12 job categories (4 in Administrative, 6 in Academic, 1 Research and 1 Public Service), the 1998 report used 6 categories: regular faculty, adjunct/wage-rated faculty, teaching assistants, executives, staff, and wage payroll.

- Columnar and row headings were all revised to match other reports in use, such as the SBR's Budget and Expenditure summary (A-1 report).

- Separate groupings were used for jobs paid from appropriated and non-appropriated funds.

In addition, as mentioned, the second year's report listed FTE-based employees separately from a headcount of wage payroll employees, who are largely part-time workers. However, at the request of some legislators, the headcount was converted to an FTE estimate.

Institution administrators approved of the revisions to the Employee Count Report for 1998. They felt that the clarified definitions, as well as the changes in the report's structure, made it easier to categorize employees and prepare the report.

Further Improvements Are Possible

Although the 1998 Employee Count Report was easier to prepare than its predecessor and fairly accurate at the system-wide level, some concerns remain. For example, using a "snapshot" or point-in-time picture of employment data does not present data for a full fiscal year; consideration could be given to using year-end data. Second, remaining differences in classifying employees reduced the comparability of data between schools. Third, a few institution-specific reporting procedures introduced inconsistencies. As the SBR continues to refine the report, overall accuracy and specific comparability of the data should increase.

Point-in-Time Methodology Has Limitations

A "snapshot" of data early in the fall term is traditional in Higher Education, but may not give a full

The Legislature should consider whether fall "snapshot" or the prior fiscal year summary data are preferable. Data accuracy and completeness are limited as a natural consequence of the "snapshot" or point-in-time methodology used. Because a snapshot presents data captured at one point, fluctuations over the year are not presented. The data included in the Employee Count Report are also affected by the institutions' personnel reporting practices. Using a year-end data summary would reduce the fluctuations but would mean using older data.

One reason the Employee Count used the snapshot approach was to give the Legislature the most current information available. SBR staff considered using data from the previous fiscal year-end, but pointed out that doing so would have given older data to the Legislature. Using the fall snapshot (also used for some federal reporting requirements) provided data that were about 3 months old instead of 18 months old. Staff also stated that using the so-called "high water mark" of the third week of the fall term is traditional in Higher Education and shows staffing at its highest level, just after class drop/add time ends.

The snapshot may affect how completely data are reported, however. If employees are not included at the snapshot, the data are less accurate. The following are some of the limitations of this method:

- If a time card is not submitted by an hourly employee, the person will not be included in the report;

- If an employee has recently been hired or quit, the appropriate information may not be in the records used for the snapshot;

- If an employee with intermittent employment (seasonal workers, ushers, or others who work special events), does not work during the snapshot time, he or she may not be included in the count.

While some institutions' counts may not have included some intermittent employees, UVSC's procedure is to count all employees with "active" assignments, including those who did *not* work during the snapshot time frame. For example, though the Employee Count Reported 37 hourly employees in the UVSC Public Safety Department, only 22 of the employees worked during that pay period.

Some Inconsistent Placement in Categories Occurred

Institutions followed a variety of decision rules when placing employees in report categories.

The SBR should consider clarifying the guidelines to define the job classes belonging to each NACUBO report category. A variety of decision rules were used at different institutions to place employees into the 1998 job categories. Although the SBR's goal was to standardize reporting, inconsistencies still occurred, though institution-wide data should not have been affected.

As previously mentioned, the institutional research director at WSU indicated that department chairs may have been included in the report's executive category (although department chairs are excluded from the Employee Count Report's definition of executive). This was done partly because WSU categorizes department chairs as executives and partly because time constraints caused the mistake to remain undetected. Department chairs should have been placed in the faculty category, except for their administrative time, which should have been placed in the staff category.

Placing employees in categories different from in-house formats may change data in specific categories.

Report preparers at the U of U placed some employees into report categories that differed from those used by departments. For example, Athletic Department tutors with Teaching Assistant titles were classed as hourly employees in the Employee Count because their duties differed from standard TA duties. Some physics and chemistry department staff were classified as Teaching Assistants or Hourly Employees in the Employee Count Report.

Decisions to re-categorize employees to fit the report's groupings may also not have been made uniformly across institutions. While we did not investigate this area in depth, the use of a variety of decision rules raises the question of whether it would be worthwhile to further clarify the guidelines used by the institutions to put their employees into the report categories.

Consistency Affected by Use of Different Procedures

Different methods were used to count employees at some of the sampled institutions.

Finally, procedures specific to an institution can limit the comparability of report data from institution to institution. Specifically, different methods were used to convert the headcount of hourly (wage payroll) employees to an FTE count at one institution and to count adjunct faculty at another.

Administrators at the U of U stated they used the conversion process outlined by the SBR, which was to take the total hours worked for the snapshot pay period, then divide by 80, the hours worked by one full-time employee. However, UVSC staff converted its headcount by computing 32 percent of the total headcount for the pay period to arrive at an estimated FTE. At WSU, staff followed the procedure outlined by the SBR for converting headcount employees to an FTE, but used an expenditures-based formula to estimate the number of adjunct faculty.

WSU staff stated they estimated the FTE of adjunct faculty, dividing total semester expenditures for adjunct faculty by the amount paid an adjunct to teach one credit hour, then dividing the quotient by 15 (a full-time credit load for a semester). Data generated by an expenditures-based formula are qualitatively different from those based on an actual count. The use of an expenditures-based formula suggests that data are generated from a longer period of time than would be involved in a snapshot.

In conclusion, the 1998 Employee Count Report is a usable summary of the USHE's employees. However, some procedural improvements are still possible to increase consistency and accuracy.

SBR Accurately Summarized Instructional Credit Load Data

In addition to determining whether the Employee Count Report is an accurate depiction of USHE employees, we reviewed another report to assess how well the SBR staff summarize institution-level data into system-wide reports. The institutions' data on instructional credit load for 1998 were aggregated

accurately when reported to the Legislature.

We compared instructional credit load reports prepared by three USHE institutions with the summary data included in the USHE Data Book for 1999-2000. Data in the aggregate report were transferred accurately from the institutions' reports. This transfer condensed nine pages of data into a one-page system-wide summary, but we traced institutional data to the summary without difficulty.

Recommendations:

The listed recommendations are aimed at further refinements to the Employee Count Report.

1. We recommend that the SBR take further steps to ensure institutions are consistent in the use of instructions and slotting employees into job classes when compiling the USHE Employee Count Report.

2. We recommend that the SBR discuss the options of basing the Employee Count Report on point-in-time vs. year-end data with the Legislature so the Legislature can decide which data set best meets its needs.

3. We recommend that the University of Utah, along with the SBR, revisit the way "exact pay" employees are counted (or not) for report purposes once their new personnel data system is fully operational.

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Chapter III
Faculty Workload Data Show More Instruction

Faculty workload data within the Utah System of Higher Education (USHE) reflect that professors and instructors are spending more time in instruction-related activities when compared to instructors at peer institutions and national averages. USHE faculty carry an equal or greater credit load compared to their peers and devote a higher percentage of time to instruction. In addition, most USHE institutions comply with the average credit load policy implemented by the Board of Regents (SBR). This chapter provides information on USHE faculty workload in the following areas:

- Sampled USHE institutions' faculty teach a higher credit load than selected peers and national category averages for like institutions.

- The SBR has implemented a policy requiring professors to teach average minimum credit loads. Compliance with this policy needs some improvement: USHE's four-year institutions meet the requirements, while three of the five two-year institutions taught less than the required credit load in 1997-98.

- USHE faculty's overall workload percentages differ from national averages. Sampled institutions in the USHE dedicate a higher percentage of time to all instructional activities, while spending less time in research when compared to national data.

Faculty accountability is a concern for many state legislatures. Efforts in Utah to address this concern include requiring a minimum number of credit hours to be taught and surveying faculty on their instructional and non-instructional activities. These efforts are unique when compared to surrounding states, which do not have such policies nor collect such data. Because of the limited data available from surrounding states' institutions, national data were reviewed as well.

USHE Instructional Credit Load Favorable Compared to Others'

U of U and WSU faculty surpass their peers and the national averages in credits taught.

Sampled institutions within the USHE compare well to respective peer institutions and national averages in classroom credit hours taught. USHE faculty at both the University of Utah (U of U) and Weber State University (WSU) surpass their peers and the national average in classroom credits taught. Utah Valley State College (UVSC) faculty teach a classroom credit load similar to its peers; however, they teach slightly less than the national average for public two-year institutions.

In assessing faculty workload, we found that instructional credit loads allow for a more objective comparison with others since classroom credit hours are verifiable and not just self-reported as are surveys of hours worked. We first compared the sampled USHE institutions' classroom credit hours to credit loads at several institutions taken from the SBR's list of peer institutions. To validate the comparison, we then compared overall USHE faculty workload to workload data aggregated at the national level for institutions in the same categories.

USHE Classroom Credit Load Comparable to Peers'

USHE sample institutions exceed or match peer institutions' credit loads.

USHE faculty teach a comparable credit load to faculty in their respective peer institutions. We found that both WSU and the U of U faculty exceed their peers in credits taught while UVSC faculty teach an equivalent amount of credit hours as their peers.

The peer institutions were selected by the audit team from existing USHE peer lists. Five institutions were contacted for each of the three sampled USHE institutions. Figure V depicts credit load differences between the selected USHE institutions and the peers from which information was obtained.

Figure V. Comparison of Credits Taught at Research, Comprehensive, and Two-Year Institutions. U of U and WSU faculty teach more credit hours than peers. UVSC faculty teach a comparable credit load to their peers.

Level of Institution	Institution	Credit Hours
Research Universities	**University of Utah**	**10.5**
	University of Arizona	8.4
	University of Colorado Boulder	9.5
	Univ. of No. Carolina, Chapel Hill	6.0
Comprehensive Universities	**Weber State University**	**12.4**
	Boise State University	9.0
	Eastern Washington University	12.0
	University of Southern Colorado	12.0
Two-Year Institutions	**Utah Valley State College**	**15.0**
	Chemeketa Comm. College	15.0
	North Idaho College	15.0

Peers' credit load composition is similar to USHE institutions.

Peers' credit-load data contain similar components to Utah's. We contacted the directors of institutional research at each peer institution to gain assurance that their average credit load included individualized instruction, thesis supervision, and doctoral dissertation supervision. We then compared the three sampled USHE institutions to national data to obtain a broader comparison of faculty credit load within the Utah System of Higher Education.

Most USHE Institutions Sampled Exceed National Credit-Load Average

According to the National Center for Education Statistics' (NCES) National Study of Post-secondary Faculty (NSOPF), the U of U and WSU faculties exceed the national average in classroom credits taught. UVSC faculty teach approximately one credit hour below the national average for public two-year institutions. Figure VI depicts the comparisons between national and USHE credit-load data. National data

provide a broader view of the instruction component of faculty workload that is consistent with the peer comparison.

Figure VI. USHE Comparisons with National Data. USHE four-year institutions teach more credits than the national average for comparable institutions.

U of U and WSU faculty exceed the national average in credit hours taught.

Institution	USHE Credit Load*	Average of Comparable Institutions**
University of Utah	7.2	6.6
Weber State University	11.7	10.7
Utah Valley State College	14.9	16.1

**** USHE credit hours adjusted to exclude individualized instruction & thesis/dissertation hours.***
***** National credit load average did not include individual instruction or thesis/dissertation supervision. Data are from 1993, the most recently available national data.***

USHE data in this figure were adjusted to exclude individualized instruction hours because this category is excluded from NSOPF data. Overall, the national data reinforce the comparison with the peer groups previously discussed: USHE faculty spend somewhat more time in the classroom than faculty at most similar institutions. Having found this to be the case, we then reviewed USHE institutions' compliance with a recently implemented policy on required credit loads.

Compliance with Credit-load Policy Needs Some Improvement

Most USHE institutions comply with policy to teach 9, 12, or 15 credit hours depending on institution type.

Although several USHE colleges fall short of their required teaching load, all of the four-year universities meet or exceed the required average credit load. The credit load policy was instituted in response to a growing concern with faculty workload. The Utah State Board of Regents implemented the faculty credit load guidelines (R485) in August of 1998.

The policy requires that the institutional teaching workload on average for full-time faculty will be as follows:

- Research universities shall teach 9 semester credit hours

- Regional universities shall teach 12 semester credit hours
- State and community colleges shall teach 15 semester credit hours.

In addition, the policy states that:

> *Each full-time faculty member paid with instructional Education and General funds is expected to teach classes and to assume a reasonable workload of related instructional activities that constitute a full-time instructional load.*

Three institutions at the two-year level fall short of required 15 credit hours.

Figure VII shows that all of Utah's four-year universities taught the required level of credit hours in 1998 as outlined in the policy. Of the two-year schools, only Dixie College and UVSC meet the required teaching level.

Figure VII. Comparison between USHE Faculty Workload Policy and Actual Credit Loads Taught. Most USHE institutions meet the credit load required by the State Board of Regents.

Institution	Required Credit Load	Actual Credit Load
University of Utah	9	10.5
Utah State University	9	10.6
Southern Utah University	12	12.8
Weber State University	12	12.4
Dixie College	15	16.9
Utah Valley State College	15	15.0
Snow College	15	14.6
Salt Lake Comm. College	15	14.2
College of Eastern Utah	15	13.8

Source: 1999-2000 Data Book, Utah System of Higher Education

Note that the institutions typically have additional faculty contact hours with students because of labs, practicums, vocational training, rehearsals, and other related instructional time.

Of the three colleges falling short of the required credit load, the College of Eastern Utah is lowest with 13.8 semester credit hours. This is roughly 1 credit (or 8 percent) below the policy requirement. The other two institutions fall less than 1 credit away from meeting the required credit load. It should be noted that these institutions meet or exceed a related requirement, that of instruction-related faculty contact hours with students, such as from labs, vocational classes, and rehearsals.

The credit-load policy is approximately one year old, so additional time may be needed for all institutions to come into compliance. Next year's data will allow for a valid comparison. Previous years' faculty workload data do not include average classroom credits per faculty, making it difficult to assess whether the new policy has already caused any changes in teaching activity. With the 1998 data as a baseline, average credit loads in the future can be reviewed for trends and changes.

Having reviewed the USHE's performance in instructional credit workload (the verifiable portion of faculty workload), we looked at overall faculty workload data to compare the USHE to similar institutions in the self-reported research and service activities as well.

Self-Reported USHE Faculty Workload Percentages Differ from National Averages

USHE faculty generally put more time into instruction and less in research than the national averages.

When compared to like institutions nationally, faculty at the sampled USHE schools report that as a percentage they spend more time in instruction-related activities than the national average. The tradeoff, however, is that most Utah faculty spend less time in research activities than the national average. UVSC faculty spend slightly more than the national average in research activities.

Comparison data were taken from the NSOPF because overall faculty activity data were not collected by the peer institutions. Figure VIII compares the averages at the three sampled USHE institutions with national averages.

Figure VIII. Faculty Workload Comparisons for Public Research, Comprehensive and Two-Year Institutions. U of U, WSU, and UVSC faculty devote more time to instruction than the national average for similar institutions.

Institution	Faculty Activity Category	Institutional Average	National Average
U of U	Instruction	47.4%	42.6%
	Research	26.6	28.6
	Administration	10.9	11.5
	Other	15.2	17.3
WSU	Instruction	66.2%	60.1%
	Research	8.4	14.0
	Administration	13.0	11.8
	Other	12.4	14.1
UVSC	Instruction	72.0%	68.8%
	Research	5.1	4.5
	Administration	12.8	12.0
	Other	10.1	14.6

Note: The Other category includes public service and professional development.

In all three USHE institutions, faculty report spending more time in instruction than the national average. Additional observations are as follows:

- U of U faculty report spending about five percent more time in instructional activities and a lower percentage of time in research activities than the national average for research universities.

- The faculty at Weber State University (WSU) spend six percent more time in instructional activities and five percent less time in research activities than the national average for comprehensive universities.

- UVSC's faculty spend three percent more time than the national average on instruction-related activities; they also spend slightly

  more time in research and administration than the national average.

The U of U is one of the few USHE institutions to gather data on hours worked

per faculty member. U of U faculty report working 57.7 hours per week, which is higher than the national average of 56.4 hours per week for research university faculty. Thus, not only were the percentages of time spent higher than national averages, the total hours professors reported working were also higher than national totals.

The self-reporting of faculty activity data creates problems of reliability.

One drawback to using faculty activity data is that most of the data are self-reported. Therefore, reporting the data either in hours or percentages allows for the possibility of inflated figures and subjective analysis. Another drawback to collecting faculty activity data is that few peers report such data, making comparisons to the USHE difficult.

In addition, we found that two Utah institutions used slightly different procedures in collecting and reporting data on last year's faculty activity survey than were developed by the Board of Regents. The U of U requested faculty to report hours worked instead of percentages of time worked. Salt Lake Community College (SLCC) asked faculty to report both hours and percentages. In some individual faculty surveys at SLCC, the hours did not coincide with the percentages provided by that employee. For comparisons between institutions, the surveys should consistently ask for the same thing, either percentages or hours.

Recommendations:

1. We recommend that the Board of Regents continue to monitor compliance with Policy 485 on institutional teaching workload.

2. We recommend that the Legislature determine whether the SBR should continue to survey faculty for research and service activity data. The self-reported nature of these components of the data will always raise questions about objectivity.

3. If the faculty activity survey is continued, we recommend that the Board of Regents and institutions decide whether to report faculty activity data in hours or percentages, and then to be consistent in using the method agreed upon.

Chapter IV
Non-Instructional Staff Workload Measures Are Few

Relatively little workload information exists for higher ed non-instructional staff.

Although significant national and local attention has been given to faculty workload issues, comparably little workload measurement has been done on non-instructional employees in higher education. The lack of workload measures for non-instructional staff, either locally or nationally, made it necessary for us to look at USHE staffing patterns (i.e., employees by type) compared to staffing in institutions elsewhere. This staffing comparison was reinforced by reviewing how USHE administrators make hiring and staffing decisions.

This chapter includes sections on the following:

- Staffing patterns in the USHE and other states show that higher education institutions typically have more non-instructional than instructional staff.

- Workload and staffing decisions hinge on managerial assessment of needs and availability of funds.

Staffing patterns, as used in this chapter, refer to comparisons of the relative proportion of groupings within the total workforce. For example, we compared non-teaching to teaching employees. Another frequent comparison is that of professional to non-professional positions.

Non-Instructional Staffing Patterns Are Similar to Peers'

In the absence of commonly used workload measurement or staffing standards for non-instructional staff, we compared the composition of the USHE workforce to national data. The intent was to determine whether USHE staffing patterns are similar to patterns in other public institutions. Generally, there are more non-teaching than teaching staff in both the USHE and institutions across the nation.

Higher Education Has More Non-Teaching Than Teaching Staff

6 out of 10 USHE employees are non-teaching staff.

Although instruction is the primary goal of higher education, data indicate that there are more non-teaching and support staff than teaching staff. The following figure shows the breakdown of teaching and non-teaching staff for the three sampled USHE institutions and for the system as a whole.

Figure IX. Proportion of Teaching to Non-Teaching Staff. Utah higher education institutions employ more non-teaching staff than teaching staff.

FTE Type	University of Utah	Weber State Univ	UVSC	USHE Totals
Teaching	30.5%	33.2%	33.6%	31.9%
Non- Teaching	69.5	66.8	66.4	68.1
Total	**100.0%**	**100.0%**	**100.0%**	**100.0%**

Note: Data taken from 1998 S-12 Staffing Report, with FTE conversion; data reflect total institution except that hospital staff at the U of U were not included.

When grouped by whether they teach (regular and adjunct faculty and teaching assistants) or not (executives, professional and nonprofessional staff, plus hourly employees), the USHE employs more non-instructional staff than instructional.

Non-teaching staff outnumber teaching staff in the USHE and nationally.

The USHE averaged 68.1 percent non-instructional employees in Fall 1998. Nationally, public institutions have more non-instructional than instructional employees as well, showing a similar trend. (However, we were unable to establish the level of comparability of the national data to USHE data in the time we had.)

As seen in Figure IX, the proportion of non-teaching staff increases as an institution's mission changes. For example, UVSC (as a two-year college) has a slightly lower percentage of non-teaching staff than Weber State University (a four-year comprehensive institution). In turn, WSU has a lower percentage of non-teaching staff than the U of U, a research institution. These trends are more noticeable when reviewing Education and General funding sources as opposed to total institution funding. According to SBR staff, this shift is largely attributable to differences in funding sources among the institutions. For example, as the amount of research funding increases, so does the number of non-teaching staff. With less research funding at the two-year schools, a greater

proportion of funding and staff is given to instruction.

Staffing Decisions Are Discretionary in Nature

USHE staffing levels are dependent on management's judgment and funding availability, not on workload measurement.

Higher education administrators, both in Utah and at some peer institutions, have generally indicated that staffing decisions are made more on a budgetary basis than by workload measurement. Administrators assess staffing needs in a given area, using their judgment about workload; their decisions also hinge on funds being available. There is some use of operational data (when available) to determine staffing needs, but staffing standards or workload measures (e.g., 1 secretary per X administrators) are not available for most non-instructional positions.

Higher Ed Similar to Other Public Entities: Management Decisions Determine Staffing

According to Utah's Human Resources Department, workload measures are unusual in state agencies.

Budget and human resource administrators as well as department administrators in public higher education indicated that staffing and workload decisions are frequently discretionary and "budget-driven." Managers are relied upon to assess staffing needs, but without the aid of staffing ratios or other standards. The available budget, more than workload measurement or staffing standards, determines whether staff can be added. According to the Utah Department of Human Resource Management, this is fairly typical of most state agencies. DHRM's classification manager stated that the existence or use of workload standards is unusual and that budgetary considerations generally guide state agency managers in personnel decisions.

According to the U of U's budget director, budget-driven decisions refer to the critical allocation of scarce resources. In other words, decisions are based not just on need, but on what is the most critical need for the funds available. In addition, budget directors at all three sampled USHE institutions indicated that administrators go through a fairly extensive process of trimming and prioritizing budget requests to present the most important needs. Department heads are depended upon to make decisions on staffing requests based on their assessment that more personnel are needed. This assessment only occasionally involves the use of actual workload measures.

Some Administrators Measure Workload or Consult Staffing Standards

There are some workload measures in areas with easily defined activity.

Workload measures for many professional and instructional positions are difficult to develop, perhaps because of the nature of the work. The provision of services and use of mental processes may not produce tangible, measurable results. Some other jobs, especially in support areas, feature observable and measurable processes. For example, USHE administrators of plant operations and libraries indicated that they use some national staffing standards or local data in planning. Also, some studies have examined the number of employees used to process financial aid applications.

Physical plant directors at some USHE institutions indicated they have standards available to them on how many custodial and maintenance staff are needed, based on the work to be done on the physical plant. One director indicated he collects and reviews data that illustrate how long jobs should take and how many staff are needed to do the job in a certain amount of time. Another director indicated he also collects these data and has used them in making staffing requests, but that budgetary constraints often override other considerations in staffing at his institution.

Librarians at two USHE institutions indicated they try to use collection and circulation data, among other things, when staffing the library. There are national standards and comparison information available from the National Center for Education Statistics (NCES) on library size and staffing in other institutions, allowing USHE librarians to compare their staffing levels to national data when requesting staff. One librarian indicated this approach has worked fairly well for his school, along with the occurrence of enrollment growth that also justified adding staff.

Finally, some higher education financial aid offices are staffed in accordance with the volume of financial aid processed. Although not an established standard as such, it appears fairly common that these offices staff one full-time salaried employee (on average) per million dollars of aid disbursed. According to the researchers, the total number of awards granted is a straightforward workload measure for staffing this area.

Appendix I

Utah State Board of Regents Performance Indicators

A) Instructional Quality and Student Learning

Purpose of these Indicators:
To increase the level of academic achievement of students.

Potential Indicators:
1) Proportion of students who pass licensure examinations
2) *Increase in the number and proportion of students who pass norm-referenced licensure and other examinations with higher scores than the average score currently earned by USHE students
3) Average student score in a standardized and norm-referenced general education achievement test
4) Measurement of employment results of ATE Programs

B) Retention, Transfer and Graduation

Purposes of these Indicators:
To more effectively match the learning objectives of students with the capabilities of the college or university at which they are enrolled, and to provide for the completion of programs in a more cost effective and timely manner for the student, institutions, system and state.

Potential Indicators:
Retention and Graduation
1) *Average credits to graduate divided by total credits required
2) Proportion of graduates who earn bachelors degrees and associate degrees taking fewer than the current average number of credits earned by graduates
3) Proportion of an entering first-time, full-time cohort of students that earns a degree within 150% of catalog program length
4) Evidence of effective programs at institutions for identifying and providing support to students who are likely to drop out of college before completing their program of study

Potential Indicators:
Transfer
1) *Average credits for transfer students divided by average credits to graduate for native student
2) Proportion of transfer student graduates who earn associate or bachelors degrees taking fewer than the current average number of credits earned by graduates

3) Evidence of articulation agreements (transferability of course and program credits) between institutions
4) Evidence that articulation agreements are being clearly communicated to students

C) Faculty Workload

Purpose of these Indicators:
To ensure an optimum level of faculty teaching workload, and high quality instruction.

Potential Indicators:
1) *Average weekly teaching contact hours per full-time faculty divided by Regent-approved standard weekly teaching contact hour load
2) Student credit hours produced per full-time faculty
3) Proportion of credit hours taught by full-time faculty
4) Survey of faculty workload in non-teaching activities, including preparation for teaching, scholarship, research, and service

* indicates a performance measure that could be budget-related

USHE Institution-Specific Performance Indicators

University of Utah

Strengthening research/scholarship, teaching, service, and their interdependence -
(1) Increase the number and percentage of graduates who have had a culminating or other special scholarly experience.
(2) Increase the scholarly and research activity of faculty, dollars spent in extramural funding, and number of patents disclosed and awarded.

Utah State University

Improving the quality of academic programs -
(1) Increase measured quality of students accepted for admission to the University.
(2) Increase percentage of students retained in the University from the freshman to sophomore year.

Weber State University

Improving student satisfaction and the quality of programmatic assessment -
(1) Increase student satisfaction with instructional effectiveness, academic advising, student centeredness, and other aspects of the institution.
(2) Increase the number of programs with meaningful assessment and the number of students participating in these assessments.

Southern Utah University

Improving effectiveness of the freshman year, and increasing quality of degree programs -
(1) Increase access to bottleneck general education courses by expanding availability of certain freshman-level GE courses, and increase retention rates of freshmen from fall term to the fall term of their sophomore year.
(2) Increase the number of academic programs that seek and acquire specialized professional accreditation.

Snow College

Improving the performance of graduates who transfer and ATE program graduates -
(1) Increase the cumulative GPA of Snow transfers compared to native university students and reduce the number of courses that must be retaken by snow transfers because of articulation problems.
(2) Increase the number and percentage of Snow ATE graduates who obtain employment, and increase employer satisfaction with performance and preparation of ATE graduates.

Dixie College

Improving the performance of graduates who transfer, and increasing satisfaction of clients -
(1) Increase the cumulative GPA of Dixie transfers compared to native university students.
(2) Increase the satisfaction of the clients of Dixie College to determine if they are satisfied with the services they receive.

College of Eastern Utah

Improving the placement rates of ATE graduates, and increasing student satisfaction -
(1) Increase placement rates of Applied Technology program completers.
(2) Increase satisfaction of students with student services, academic programs, and support services.

Utah Valley State College

Increasing involvement in the community and improving institutional quality -
(1) Increasing the number and percentage of students, faculty, and staff involved in community service activities; increasing the number of businesses served by education programs; and determining the economic impact of the college on the community.
(2) Increasing the number of programs that have specialized professional accreditation and increasing the quality of faculty.

Salt Lake Community College

Strengthening students' critical literacy skills and increasing student satisfaction with services they receive -
(1) Improving students' academic success by identifying need for developmental course work and increasing success in developmental and subsequent college level classes.
(2) Increasing student satisfaction with college programs and services.

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Response

UTAH SYSTEM OF HIGHER EDUCATION
STATE BOARD OF REGENTS

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CECELIA H. FOXLEY
Commissioner and
Chief Executive Officer

September 13, 1999

Wayne L. Welsh
Legislative Auditor General
130 State Capitol
Salt Lake City, Utah 84114

Dear Mr. Welsh:

I appreciate this opportunity to respond to the report, A **Performance Audit of Higher Education Operation** Statistics. As you know, management information and performance measurement in higher education are issues that are of great interest to both the Utah State Legislature and State Board of Regents. Over the past few years, the Utah System of Higher Education has significantly increased its efforts to provide timely and accurate data for use by state policy-makers. We welcome this audit as an opportunity for an outside party to critique our processes in an effort to further improve.

I agree with the two major conclusions of the audit: (1) that the USHE employee count report which has been done for the past two years is a fairly accurate accounting of the number of and types of employees in the USHE, and (2) that data show USHE faculty spend more time in instruction-related activities than do their peers in other states. These two reports have become mainstays of the USHE's data collection activities and we intend to continue to collect and refine these data.

I also agree with the recommendations that are made in the audit. Regarding future employee count reports, I have instructed my staff to further refine the categorization of employees, to consider moving to a year-end report, and to work with the University of Utah on the treatment of their "exact pay" employees. Regarding faculty instructional activity, the Regents intend to closely monitor institutional performance against Regents policy R-485, which identifies minimum teaching loads for the USHE institutions.

There is one point regarding policy R-485 that I would like to clarify. The audit states that three institutions did not meet their minimum credit hour teaching loads during 1998. This statement is correct. However, policy R-485 addresses instructional activity more broadly than by this single measure. Actually three different performance measures are looked at by the Regents in relation to policy R-485, and all three are considered when determining if workload adjustments need to be made at an institution.

For example, Snow College's regular faculty averaged 14.56 Instructional Credit Hours during Fall Semester 1998. This compares to a Regent required minimum of 15. However, when looking at contact hours (the average hours per week a faculty member is actually in contact with students in an instructional role), Snow College averaged 19.45 compared to a Regent required minimum of 16 to 19. And Snow College faculty generated on average 367 student credit hours (Instructional Credit Hours times the number of students in the courses) during that same period, which is well above the USHE community college average of 302. Looking at the three measures collectively gives the Regents a much richer view of faculty instructional activity at Snow College than would simply looking at Instructional Credit Hours. The Regents fully intend to continue this kind of broad-based review of faculty instructional activity.

In closing, allow me to say that the USHE takes data very seriously. We have inherent challenges in collecting consistent data due to the nature of our system and the nature of higher education generally. This audit fairly represents these challenges. However, I fully believe that our system of higher education, given adequate time and resources, can appropriately respond to the data needs of state policy-makers.

Sincerely,

Cecelia H. Foxley,
Commissioner of Higher Education