

**MINUTES OF THE  
HIGHER EDUCATION APPROPRIATIONS SUBCOMMITTEE**

Room 210 East Senate Building, State Capitol Complex

February 3, 2014

**Members Present:** Sen. Stephen H. Urquhart, Co-Chair  
Rep. Keith Grover, Co-Chair  
Rep. Jon E. Stanard, House Vice Chair  
Sen. J. Stuart Adams  
Sen. Patricia W. Jones  
Sen. Aaron Osmond  
Sen. Howard A. Stephenson  
Sen. Jerry W. Stevenson  
Sen. John L. Valentine  
Rep. Jack R. Draxler  
Rep. Rebecca P. Edwards  
Rep. Dana L. Layton  
Rep. Kay L. McIff  
Rep. Marie H. Poulson  
Rep. Dean Sanpei  
Rep. Robert M. Spendlove  
Rep. Mark A. Wheatley

**Members Absent:** Rep. Don Ipson

**Staff Present:** Mr. Spencer Pratt, Fiscal Manager  
Ms. Angela Oh, Economist/Statistician  
Ms. Lorna Wells, Secretary

**Note:** A copy of related materials and an audio recording of the meeting can be found at [www.le.utah.gov](http://www.le.utah.gov).

**1. Call to Order**

Co-Chair Grover called the meeting to order at 1:36 p.m.

**2. USHE Follow-up Reports**

**a. Utah State University (USU)** Pres. Stan L. Albrecht thanked committee members for the one-time funding received last year. He introduced Mark R. McLellan, Vice President for Research and Dean of the School of Graduate Studies and James D. Morales, Vice President of Student Services.

Co-Chair Urquhart thanked Pres. Albrecht for his leadership. He stated that most of the work done by committee members is done outside of the committee. He reported that the requests for appropriations were a result of his visit to USU. He encouraged committee members in their role as policy makers to visit USHE and UCAT institutions.

1) **Use of \$3 million (one time for graduate education programs).** V.P. McLellan discussed the role of USU as a research institution and the importance of graduate programs, stating that they have received over \$200 million in new research awards each year. This research is driven by planning and innovation of faculty and graduate students. He explained that they have conducted a major overhaul of all graduate programs. Currently, USU has 11 percent graduate students, with only 100 PhD's each year. V.P. McLellan stated that the one-time funding allowed them to focus on four major areas: completion/conversion; recruitment, research improvement, and improved laboratory facilities. He discussed the presidential doctoral research fellows program and the art-STEM fellowship.

Co-Chair Grover asked for clarification on what the one-time funding was used for. Co-Chair Urquhart asked if the funding was able to increase the numbers of graduate students. V.P. McLellan answered that it is difficult to tell the results this early, but they had 36 students convert from Master's Degrees to PhD's. The funding was spread across 42 departments and applications have increased by over 100. They made improvements to six different laboratories. Co-Chair Urquhart stated that USU has such an interesting mission, he asked if there is too much focus on undergraduate programs, and what could be done to increase the numbers of graduate students.

V.P. McLellan answered that graduate programs are usually based on a strong undergraduate programs. They are proud of the hybrid cooperation between undergraduate and graduate research experiences. Pres. Albrecht commented that they do not need to increase entry-level student numbers, but they do need to increase upper-division, and graduate level programs. They have worked to have a more robust regional campus system allowing other campuses to serve as entry points. Co-Chair Urquhart stated that the two research institutions should become more selective in the admissions process. However, this is often difficult because USU is the only USHE institution in northern Utah.

Sen. Valentine asked for a summary on how the one-time funds were used to enhance graduate education at USU. V.P. McLellan reviewed some of the data presented earlier. Sen. Valentine asked if all of the funds had been allocated. V.P. McLellan stated that approximately 80 percent of the budget has been spent. Pres. Albrecht mentioned that the funds have been very helpful, but the challenge is that they were one-time dollars, but they were limited in anything that would have long-term implications. They will be requesting a portion of the funds become on-going.

Rep. Draxler asked for historical information regarding the number of graduate students at USU. V.P. McLellan indicated that there has been a fairly steady number.

Sen. Stephenson asked for clarification on the art-STEM fellowship stating that it would definitely benefit the one individual involved, but what would this mean in a bigger sense or the future of this program. V.P. McLellan answered that this was a very different approach but explained that often research requires a highly complex and creative analysis.

Rep. Layton applauded USU and stated that this is probably the wave of the future, the holistic

approach lends itself to tremendous application.

Neil Abercrombe, Director of Public Relations, explained that the one-full time amount has not yet been allocated because this was a pilot program and they are still conducting analysis.

## **2) Report of use of tuition waivers authorized to offset anticipated enrollment drop.**

VP Morales reported that USU established an enrollment task force in late 2012. This task force projected that they would lose 1,900 students over two semesters when the L.D.S. Church changed the missionary age, with a projected revenue loss of \$19 million. The tuition waivers that were approved and other aggressive promotion strategies were able to offset all but about 550 of those students. He discussed the demographics of the non-wavier recipients. V.P. Morales read a letter from Emily Avila, one of the non-waiver recipients. Co-Chair Grover asked what specifically attracted this student to USU. V.P. Morales answered that they were able to send recruiters directly to her school who emphasized the strength in the sciences. Sen. Valentine asked if a relationship between USU and this high school has been established. V.P. Morales said that they do now have a relationship with this school. V.P. Morales read a letter from Devin Gibson, who was a USU legacy waiver recipient (which is available to grandchildren of former USU students). They will continue to use these waivers according to the guidelines given which also help to maintain a diverse population at USU.

Co-Chair Urquhart mentioned that the waivers were established very late in the academic year and will be interested to see their success after a full year. V.P. Morales indicated that enrollment numbers will be up.

## **3. Committee discussion of S.B. 1 – Higher Education Base Budget Bill**

Vice Chair Stanard asked for clarification regarding completion rates, certificates earned, and headcount. The completion rates are not consistent with headcount. President Rob Brems, UCAT answered that there are different categories of students, and only certificate-seeking students are counted in the completion rates calculation.

Vice Chair Stanard suggested having mission-based equity and other types of funding be a sub-line item under the Education and General main item. This would also be helpful in subsequent years. He also suggested having intent language requiring future reports from the higher education institutions regarding graduation rates, costs per degrees, etc.

Rep. Edwards stated how much she appreciates the institutions bringing the requested data. She suggested that it would be more helpful for the institutions if they knew ahead of time what data the committee was looking for, which would also help bring more consistent metrics across the board. Often the presentations do not present data in a comparable manner. Vice Chair Stanard agreed that it would be very helpful to have more consistent data, stating that is okay for certain degrees to be very expensive. Rep. Edwards commented that institutions could also be asked what information is missing that would be helpful for committee members to have.

**MOTION:** Co-Chair Urquhart moved to forward S.B. 1 “Higher Education Base Budget Bill” as written to the Executive Appropriations Committee. The vote was unanimous with Sen. Stephenson absent for the vote.

**MOTION:** Sen. Osmond moved to adjourn. The motion passed unanimously.

Co-Chair Urquhart adjourned the meeting at 3:43 p.m.

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Sen. Stephen H. Urquhart, Co-Chair

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Rep. Keith Grover, Co-Chair