

A YEAR IN REVIEW:

OFFICE OF THE COMMISSIONER OF HIGHER EDUCATION

The Office of the Commissioner made great strides over the past year in all aspects of its work with the Board of Higher Education and System.

STUDENT AFFAIRS

- Assumed oversight of Keys to Success, the state online platform for college and career readiness.
- Secured state funding to expand the Utah System of Higher Education's JED Foundation partnership to USHE technical colleges.
- **Scholarships and grants**
 - Established the Opportunity Scholarship, a revised state achievement scholarship aligned to high school preparation that best predicts college success.
 - Expanded the availability of state aid programs to all high school students.
 - Established a state grant program for adult learners.
- Established the Campus Safety and Equity Commission chaired by both student Board members.

EQUITY, DIVERSITY AND INCLUSION

- The Commissioner's office hired its first Assistant Commissioner for Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion to coordinate systemwide EDI efforts.
- The Commissioner's office and Chief Diversity Officers around the System further developed and modeled an Equity Lens Framework for the Utah System of Higher Education to evaluate any existing or new strategy, policy, or initiative.

"I believe this program is exceptional in bridging the gap for first-generation, low income, and underrepresented students."

—Ashlie McDonald, Dixie High School Counselor

STRATEGIC INITIATIVES AND ACCESS

- Successfully adopted and implemented the Board's five-year strategic plan, aligned with the Governor's One Utah Plan, and with performance funding measures, state attainment goals, and meaningful integration of equity, diversity, and inclusion.
- **The Commissioner's office is working to expand the college access advising program from 12 to 89 high schools to serve over 80% of Utah's high school senior class.**
- Improved coordination with the Utah State Board of Education and their staff.

50,364

degrees and certificates awarded
in 2019-20 from USHE institutions

24,718

In 2019-20, USHE institutions
produced 24,718 graduates (57.5%)
from high-demand fields.



TECHNICAL EDUCATION

- Institutional roles and missions were further defined and clarified, laying the groundwork to reduce duplication and streamline pathways.
- With legislative provisions, the previously separate Technical College Scholarship and degree-granting CTE Scholarship were combined into a single Technical Education Scholarship.
- Board members, institutions, and staff expanded their vision and established a culture that values and promotes technical education and degree-granting education.
- The Board approved Policy R474 to direct technical colleges and degree-granting institutions with a technical college role to transition technical education from clock-hours to credit-hours to provide common currency among the 16 USHE institutions and more.
- As one of its strategic initiatives, the Board is working structure programs to facilitate completion and transfer among all 16 USHE institutions.

ACADEMIC AFFAIRS

- Faculty Major Committees made the next round of decisions regarding minimum scores/maximum credits for national standardized exams in Prior Learning Assessment.
- **Transfer**
 - After examining transfer difficulties between associate and bachelor's degrees, the Board Transfer Council recommended the creation of new direct transfer pathways within majors.
 - The Transfer Guide website was updated to include the majority of bachelor's degree majors within the System.
- The Concurrent Enrollment program received a grant from the National Alliance of Concurrent Enrollment Partnerships to study students who do not self-select into CE in order to facilitate their entry into the program.

63.9%

of Utah students graduating from high school in 2017 were enrolled in college or university within three years

55.8%

of Utah students graduating from high school in 2017 were enrolled at a USHE institution within three years

40.9%

of USHE students receive an award within 8 years of entry

FINANCE AND FACILITIES

- Led the System effort to review, adjust, and revise general student fees, including the adoption of Policy R516, which provides guidelines to degree-granting institutions for setting, reviewing, and eliminating general student fees.
- Initiated a shared services review of the System.
- Improved internal finances and space management in the Commissioner's office.

DATA

- Integrated technical education data into data visualizations.
- Partnered with institutions to set goals to meet systemwide five- and ten-year goals.
- Designed and built a high school feedback database for longitudinal analysis of access and success of Utah high school students in postsecondary education.

