



# UTAH SYSTEM OF HIGHER EDUCATION 2015-16 ANNUAL REPORT

Daniel W. Campbell, Chair  
Utah State Board of Regents

David L. Buhler, Commissioner  
Utah System of Higher Education

# Utah System of Higher Education FACTS AT A GLANCE



8 out of 10 Utah high school graduates who enroll in college, enroll in a USHE institution

**170,770** Fall 2015 enrollment (120,460 FTE)

Degrees & certificates awarded in 2014-15

**32,797** 

Enrollment grew 2% in 2014-15



**207%**

Latino enrollment growth since 2004



The Board of Regents adopted a 10-year strategic plan focusing on Affordable Participation, Timely Completion, and Innovative Discovery

**3<sup>RD</sup>**  
**LOWEST TUITION**

At Utah's public universities, compared to the nation



Utah has the lowest average student debt in the country

USHE expects 52,000 additional students (headcount) in the next 10 years



**3.7%**

Tuition increase approved by the Board of Regents, the 2<sup>nd</sup>-lowest average increase in 17 years



Only 2 out of 5 USHE students complete their degree within 150% of time

The Utah Educational Savings Plan received a Morningstar® rating of Gold for the 5<sup>th</sup> consecutive year



# 5.3%

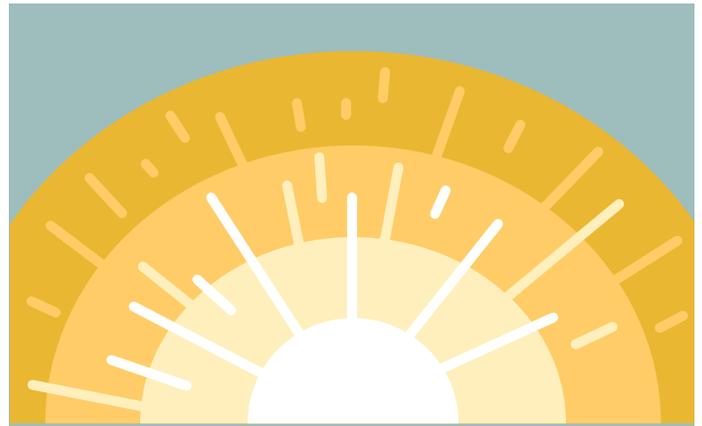
Overall budget increase during the 2016 legislative session



1/3 of all Utah high school juniors & seniors take a concurrent enrollment class

# \$32.5M

Concurrent enrollment students save over \$32.5 million in future tuition expenses



USHE grads will generate \$47 million in additional revenues to Utah this year, with 93% of those increased revenues coming from those with a bachelor's degree or higher



USHE math study found taking math the first year of college triples your chance of success

USHE institutions are among the most efficient in the country, ranking 45<sup>th</sup> in overall educational revenues per FTE



# 20,000+

Utah College Application Week helped over 20,000 high school seniors apply to college during the school day

# ↑ 26%

Increase in Regents' Scholarship recipients

Utah Scholars reached over 32,000 8<sup>th</sup> grade students



Provides 70% of all career and technical education (CTE) in Utah

Job placement rate for USHE CTE grads:

# 84%



USHE Counselor Conference provided the best college advice to over 750 school counselors

## Utah: A State of Opportunity

In January 2016, the Board of Regents formally adopted its strategic plan, *Utah: A State of Opportunity*. The plan addresses key issues facing higher education in Utah, including increasing capacity to serve 50,000+ new students by 2025 and increasing the educational attainment of Utahns to meet workforce demand. The strategic plan follows the long-term objectives for higher education in Utah, approved by the Board of Regents and aimed at providing an intentional focus on USHE priorities, programs, and initiatives to address the aforementioned key higher education issues: Affordable Participation, Timely Completion, and Innovative Discovery.

To evaluate improvement in these areas, USHE set ambitious ten-year goals, the progress of which will be measured through specific metrics and reported to the Board of Regents annually:

### **Affordable Participation**

- Goal: Increase the number of Utahns who decide to access, are prepared for, and succeed in higher education.
- Metric: Increase the percentage of Utah high school graduates enrolling in college within five years from 66% to 75% by 2025.

### **Timely Completion**

- Goal: Increase the percentage of students who persist in and graduate from higher education.
- Metric: Increase degree productivity to 28 awards per 100 FTE (from 25 currently) by 2025.

### **Innovative Discovery**

- Goal: Encourage innovation as a core value at each USHE institution, in keeping with its distinct mission.
- Metric: Regularly assess student involvement in high-impact learning practices.

In order to meet these goals, it is estimated that a consistent annual investment of 5.2% in appropriated state funds is needed. (This is 30% above the ten-year historical average of 4%.) This 5.2% investment from the state will still require increased investment from students as well, through tuition increases and student growth. This investment in higher education would have a large return for Utah: USHE graduates will contribute more than \$150 billion to Utah's economy over the next decade.

## Enrollment

Utah's public colleges and universities saw a 2% increase in enrollment this year. After two consecutive years of flat enrollment growth, primarily driven by the missionary age change announced in fall 2012 by the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, returning missionaries are finding their way back to campus. The percent increase in full-time equivalent (FTE) students was slightly larger, at 2.79%, which indicates more students are taking heavier courseloads. Also, since 2004, there has been a 207% increase in Hispanic/Latino student enrollment at Utah's public higher education institutions.

While college enrollments across the U.S. have declined in the past year, USHE's ten-year enrollment projections are estimated to outpace the country with an expected 52,000 additional students coming to USHE campuses over the next ten years.

**52,000**

Expected additional students coming to USHE campuses over the next 10 years

## Completion

According to the Lumina Foundation's report, *A Stronger Nation 2016*, 47.9% of Utahns aged 25-64 have earned a college degree or certificate as of 2014. New to the report this year is the inclusion of those who have earned a high-quality certificate (6% in Utah).

Despite this, only two out of five USHE students complete their degree within 150% of time (six years for a bachelor's, three years for an associate). About half of students graduate within 200% of time (eight years for a bachelor's, four years for an associate).

What is being done to increase Utah's college completion rate? In 2013, the Board of Regents passed a College Completion Resolution, outlining

five proven initiatives based in research and best practices and designed to help Utah students achieve their goals:

- 1. 15 to Finish:** In June 2013, USHE launched the 15 to Finish campaign, which encourages students to take at least 15 credits per semester in order to graduate on time. It targets the 37% of USHE students who take 12-14 credits per semester and could cut a year off of their time to graduation by taking just one more class per semester.
- 2. Plateau tuition:** Seven of the eight USHE colleges and universities have instituted plateau tuition, with an emphasis on 12 to 15 credits.
- 3. Math:** Approximately 40% of college students are placed in remedial courses. USHE institutions are devising innovative ways to help students with math and encourage them to take math as soon as they arrive on campus. Students who took math their first year in college (including remedial math) are three times more likely to pass credit-bearing math within five years.
- 4. Graduation maps:** Nearly 100% of degree programs at USHE institutions have up-to-date graduation maps.
- 5. Reverse transfer/stackable credentials:** USHE institutions are working to ensure that all certificates can count or "stack" toward an associate degree, and all AA/AS degrees also "stack" with four-year degrees. USHE is also working with institutions to ensure students who have completed the appropriate credits for an associate degree can be awarded one, even after transferring to a university.

Last year, USHE awarded completion grants to support and encourage institutional work in increasing completion rates on their campuses.

[higheredutah.org/enrollment-increases-over-2-at-utahs-public-colleges-and-universities/](http://higheredutah.org/enrollment-increases-over-2-at-utahs-public-colleges-and-universities/)  
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[higheredutah.org/ushe-works-to-improve-college-completion-rates/](http://higheredutah.org/ushe-works-to-improve-college-completion-rates/)

# Paying for College

## Tuition and Student Debt

Utah once again ranked third-lowest in the nation for tuition and fees at public universities (\$6,360 compared to \$9,410 nationally). Utah has the lowest average student debt in the country, at \$18,921 (\$28,950 nationally). Only 54% of Utah college students take out student loans, the seventh-lowest in the nation.

For the 2016-17 academic year, the Board of Regents approved an average systemwide tuition increase of 3.7%—the second-lowest average increase in 17 years. The increase is 3.5% at six of Utah's eight higher education institutions.

## Gift Aid

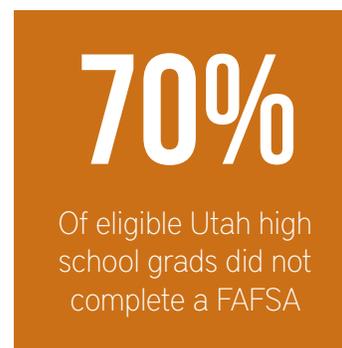
Gift aid—funding for students that does not need to be repaid, such as scholarships and grants—is a significant factor in making college more affordable. In fact, 61% of USHE students received some form of gift aid, averaging \$3,614 per student. For students who received some type of gift aid, their unmet need (the remaining balance after gift aid is applied) averaged \$474; students who did not receive gift aid had an average unmet need of \$2,880. This shows that students who received gift aid, received a substantial amount: in fact, 46% of students who enrolled full-time and received gift aid had all of their tuition and fees covered.

## Utah Educational Savings Plan

The Utah Educational Savings Plan (UESP), Utah's nonprofit 529 college savings plan, received Morningstar®'s highest "Gold" rating for the fifth year in a row. UESP is not only the fastest growing college savings plan in the nation, it's the only plan that has received such consistently high marks from Morningstar®.

## FAFSA Completion

In 2014-15, 70% of eligible Utah high school graduates did not complete a Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA), the highest among all states. Last year, Utah joined the FAFSA Collective Impact Initiative, the goal of which is to assist low-income, first-generation, and underrepresented



students to education beyond high school through the FAFSA. To help boost Utah's numbers, the Utah Higher Education Assistance Authority (UHEAA)—operating under StepUp to Higher Education—hosted over 70 FAFSA Completion Open House events in the

spring of 2016, where outreach officers assisted students and their parents in filling out the FAFSA.

## "You Can Pay for College" Nights

Hosted by UHEAA and held from September through November, these 24 events informed attendees about the various ways to pay for college and the importance of filing the FAFSA. Over 5,000 students and parents attended this year's "You Can Pay for College" nights, representing a 25% increase in attendance over the prior year. New this year were events specifically for Spanish-speaking students and their families and Pacific Islander students and families.

[higheredutah.org/utah-third-in-nation-for-lowest-in-state-undergraduate-tuition/](http://higheredutah.org/utah-third-in-nation-for-lowest-in-state-undergraduate-tuition/)  
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[higheredutah.org/stepupuheaas-you-can-pay-for-college-event-attendance-increased-25-from-last-year/](http://higheredutah.org/stepupuheaas-you-can-pay-for-college-event-attendance-increased-25-from-last-year/)

## Efficiency in USHE

A combination of relatively low costs and low tuition rates make USHE institutions among the most efficient and affordable in the country. USHE's four-year institutions have the third-lowest tuition and fees in the U.S., and the average tuition funds per full-time equivalent (FTE) student at a USHE institution are 14% below the national average. The state's low tuition rates are due, in part, to comparatively strong support from recent increases in state appropriations by the Utah Legislature. However, USHE institutions are still funded 18.9% less per FTE than before the recession, and are 9% below the national average. USHE institutions also maintain comparatively low costs, ranking 45<sup>th</sup> in overall educational revenues per FTE, \$1,824 less than the U.S. average.

USHE institutions rank

**45<sup>TH</sup>**

in overall educational revenues per FTE

- Southern Utah University – New Business Building (\$8,000,000)
- Utah State University – Biological Sciences Building (\$38,000,000, two-year phased funding)
- Utah Valley University – Performing Arts Building (\$32,000,000, two-year phased funding)

## Performance Funding: Revised Metrics

Performance, or outcomes-based, funding was adopted in July 2015 (SB 232, 2015 legislative session). SB 232 requires the Board of Regents to maintain performance metrics in five specific areas:

1. Degrees and certificates granted
2. Services provided to traditionally underserved populations
3. Responsiveness to workforce needs
4. Institutional efficiency
5. Graduate research (University of Utah and Utah State University only)

Beginning July 1, 2016, the definition of the institutional efficiency metric will be changed from 150% graduation rate for first-time, full-time students to awards per full-time equivalent student (FTE).

## USHE Budget

USHE received an overall 5.3% tax fund budget increase (including ongoing and one-time increases). The most significant of these increases is a 2% compensation increase, similar to that of Utah state employees. Other legislative appropriations toward the budget priorities adopted by the Board of Regents include \$5 million (one-time) for performance funding, \$5 million (ongoing) for market demand programs, and \$8.8 million for growth in the Regents' Scholarship.

## Capital Development

USHE received funding for four of the building projects prioritized by the Board of Regents in 2015:

- Salt Lake Community College – CTE Center at Westpointe (\$42,590,500)

[higheredutah.org/ushe-among-most-efficient-new-report/](http://higheredutah.org/ushe-among-most-efficient-new-report/)  
[higheredutah.org/2016-legislative-update-week-7/](http://higheredutah.org/2016-legislative-update-week-7/)  
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# College Prep

## ACT College Readiness Report

Utah is one of 13 states that allows students to take the ACT at no cost to them during their junior year of high school; thus, 40,629 students in the 2015 graduating class have taken the ACT. According to ACT's college readiness benchmarks, Utah's students show room for improvement in college readiness in each subject area. Below is the percent of Utah students who took the ACT and met the college readiness benchmark, by subject:

- English: 59% (Utah), 64% (nation)
- Reading: 44% (Utah), 46% (nation)
- Math: 34% (Utah), 42% (nation)
- Science: 34% (Utah), 38% (nation)

## USHE Math Study

In fall 2015, USHE analyzed the math success of Utah public high school students who graduated between 2008-2012 and enrolled in a USHE institution (most recent data available from the Utah State Board of Education). Key findings include:

1. Taking math throughout all of high school is critical.
2. According to ACT, a majority of USHE first-year freshmen are not considered college-ready in math.
3. Completing the general math requirement by the end of the first year of college triples chances of success.
4. Remedial math, when taken the first year, leads to success if students immediately continue in a higher-level math.
5. As students' course loads increase, so does the likelihood of passing college math in the first year of college.

## High School Feedback Reports

To show how Utah's high school graduates are making the transition from high school to higher education, USHE created the inaugural High School Feedback Reports. These reports show the college performance of the 2013-14 high school graduating

class who went on to enroll at a public college or university in Utah the following academic year (2014-15). Some key takeaways include:

- 42% of Utah high school graduates attended college within one year of graduating high school.
- 75% have completed or started on their math track by the end of their first year of college.
- 79% of low-income students qualified for federal Pell grants.
- 25% took at least 30 credits during their first year in college.

## Higher Ed for Higher Standards

Commissioner of Higher Education David Buhler, along with all eight presidents of Utah's public colleges and universities, joined a growing coalition of higher education leaders nationwide in supporting higher education standards for students across the nation. Higher Ed for Higher Standards elevates the voices of higher ed leaders in supporting K-12 educators as they implement college- and career-ready standards, and supports these leaders in the adoption of aligned higher ed policies that leverage more ambitious K-12 standards and assessments.

## StepUp READY Grants

StepUp READY Grants provided \$600,000 of funding for partnerships between institutions of higher education, K-12 schools, and nonprofit organizations. These grants aim to increase the number of public high school students who graduate college-ready and enroll in a post-secondary institution. The grants supported intervention programs in 12 school districts across Utah.

[higheredutah.org/act-releases-latest-college-and-career-readiness-report/](http://higheredutah.org/act-releases-latest-college-and-career-readiness-report/)  
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[higheredutah.org/interested-in-stem-get-going-on-math/](http://higheredutah.org/interested-in-stem-get-going-on-math/)  
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[higheredutah.org/utah-higher-ed-leaders-support-higher-ed-for-higher-standards/](http://higheredutah.org/utah-higher-ed-leaders-support-higher-ed-for-higher-standards/)  
<http://higheredutah.org/2016-17-stepup-ready-grant-application-now-available/>

## Concurrent Enrollment (CE)

Concurrent enrollment provides an opportunity for Utah high school juniors and seniors to earn both high school and college credit at a USHE institution. In 2014-15, more than 1/3 of all high school juniors and seniors in Utah participated in concurrent enrollment, saving these students an estimated in \$32.5 million in future tuition expenses. Over their high school career, 85% of students who take concurrent enrollment take one to six concurrent enrollment classes (52% of seniors take at least one class).

52%

Of Utah high school seniors have taken at least 1 CE class

- Students participating in concurrent enrollment are nearly three times more likely to attend college within four years of high school graduation than students who don't participate.
- Utah high school students who earn any college credit—be it concurrent enrollment, Advanced Placement (AP), International Baccalaureate (IB), or College Level Examination Program (CLEP)—reduce their time to degree completion at a USHE institution by at least 1/3 for associate degrees and 17% for bachelor's degrees.
- Low-income students participating in concurrent enrollment increase their likelihood of college attendance by an additional 30% when compared to non-low-income students. Yet only 36% of low-income students participate in concurrent enrollment, compared to over half of their non-low-income counterparts.

## SB 196: Math Competency Initiative

Passed during the 2015 legislative session, SB 196: Math Competency Initiative encourages all college-going high school students to complete their college-level quantitative literacy (math) requirement during

high school, either through the ACT, a placement test, AP, IB, or concurrent enrollment classes. The general intent of this legislation is to reduce levels of math remediation in college, as 40% of incoming freshmen at USHE institutions enroll in remedial math.

Because of this bill, it is anticipated the demand for concurrent enrollment math classes will significantly increase in the coming years.

In response to the Math Competency Initiative, USHE, along with stakeholders from public education, higher education, and math departments:

- Set a framework for exploratory pathways, which guide high school students as they select a CE math class by making sure it is relevant to their intended field of study;
- Submitted specific qualifying scores for AP, IB, CLEP, ACT, and SAT math tests to the Utah State Board of Education, all of which were unanimously approved by the Board;
- Established a grant program to increase the number of teachers earning an upper-level math endorsement, and who are thus able to teach CE math classes; and
- Created a standard participation form for CE to improve the foundation of the student's subsequent traditional college experience and improve data coordination with K-12.

[higheredutah.org/concurrent-enrollment-not-only-saves-students-tuition-but-improves-college-performance/](http://higheredutah.org/concurrent-enrollment-not-only-saves-students-tuition-but-improves-college-performance/)  
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# Outreach & Access

## Utah Scholars Initiative

The Utah Scholars Initiative encourages eighth graders to be ready for college by taking a defined curriculum in high school, which has been proven to best prepare them for college work. Volunteers deliver engaging presentations in eighth-grade classrooms and also inform students of the Regents' Scholarship. In 2014-15:

- 939 Utah Scholars presentations were given by 221 volunteers
- Over 32,000 eighth graders were reached
- 2,896 students graduated with a Utah Scholars designation
- 79% of Regents' Scholarship applicants also received a Utah Scholars designation

## Regents' Scholarship

The Regents' Scholarship was created in 2008 and is funded by the Utah Legislature to help encourage Utah high school students to prepare for college both academically and financially by taking a core course of study during grades 9-12 and saving for college. The Regents' Scholarship continues to see increased growth, with a 26% increase in awards from last year (to 2,927 students). When in college, Regents' Scholarship recipients see an average first-year GPA a full point higher than non-applicants and earn about 9-10 more credits per academic year than non-applicants.

## USHE Counselor Conference

For the seventh consecutive year, USHE hosted its statewide conference for K-12 school administrators and counselors. Over 750 junior high and high school counselors attended in September 2015. This year's theme was *Engage Parents to Empower Students*, and focused on resources and strategies to help enable parents to become more involved in their child's college preparation process.

## Utah College Application Week

Utah College Application Week (UCAW) gives every high school senior in participating schools the opportunity to apply to college during the school day,

**20,000**  
Students participated in UCAW, nearly double from the previous year

with a particular focus on first-generation and low income students, who are less likely to apply to and enroll in college. The number of student participants nearly doubled in a single year, from approximately 11,000 in 2014 to over 20,000 in 2015.

- UCAW partnered with 85 school and community sites in 25 school districts
- 20,000 students participated, submitting 21,476 applications
- Of those students: 27% identified as first generation; 29% know the importance of applying for financial aid; 82% plan to complete and submit a FAFSA, 98.5% applied to a Utah college or university; and 96% of students said UCAW increased their interest in going to college

## StepUp to Higher Education

The StepUp to Higher Education Initiative encourages all Utahns to dream big about their future, and then act on those dreams by preparing for and graduating college. StepUp reaches out to Utah school counselors, students, and parents with the best advice on college prep and success through social media, a monthly newsletter, an interactive website (StepUpUtah.com), and a blog.

[higher.utah.gov/utah-scholars-reached-over-32000-eighth-graders-in-2014-15/](http://higher.utah.gov/utah-scholars-reached-over-32000-eighth-graders-in-2014-15/)

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## Increased Wages of USHE Grads

According to the U.S. Census, the wage premium that results from increased educational attainment continues to grow. For example, students receiving a bachelor's degree will earn 55% more their first year out of college than someone with only a high school diploma. As a result, 83.3% of Utah's bachelor's degree recipients—13,338 individuals—will see a total wage increase of \$218,249,694 upon entering the workforce.

USHE's 2014-15 graduates will generate an estimated \$47 million in additional revenues to Utah this year, with 93% of those increased revenues coming from those with a bachelor's degree or higher. With increased wages comes increased spending and saving capacity that will generate an additional \$26 billion in the state's economy.

## Career & Technical Education

Career and Technical Education (CTE) consists of technical or vocational training in shorter intervals—from less than one year to two years—and prepares students for specific skills needed to enter the workforce. By providing over 70% of CTE in Utah, USHE plays a critical role in bringing CTE to all regions of the state. USHE works closely with business and industry leaders to develop and deliver relevant programs specifically tailored to local workforce development needs.

- 11,665,522 membership hours taken in CTE courses in 2014-15 by students at USHE institutions
- 4,536 CTE credentials awarded
- 61,859 students enrolled in CTE at USHE institutions

**89**  
New certificates developed due to direct collaboration with business and industry

- 84% overall job placement rate for USHE CTE grads
- \$35,768 median 5<sup>th</sup>-year wages for those with a USHE certificate of at least one year
- \$43,178 median 5<sup>th</sup>-year wages for those with an AAS degree from a USHE institution
- 89 new certificates developed as a result of direct collaboration with business and industry throughout the state

## UCAP Awards

Salt Lake Community College, Southern Utah University, Utah State University-Moab, Utah Valley University, and the University of Utah were awarded grants totaling over \$1.6 million through the Utah Cluster Acceleration Partnership (UCAP). These grants support specific industry-driven projects that strengthen education and workforce alignment.

UCAP is a joint effort between the Utah System of Higher Education, the Governor's Office of Economic Development, and the Department of Workforce Services.

[higheredutah.org/2014-15-ushe-graduates-will-earn-almost-400-million-in-increased-wages-this-year/](http://higheredutah.org/2014-15-ushe-graduates-will-earn-almost-400-million-in-increased-wages-this-year/)  
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## Board of Regents

The Board of Regents oversees the governance of the Utah System of Higher Education (USHE). The Board is responsible for statewide planning, appointment of institutional presidents, approval of academic programs, prioritization of facilities requests, and submission of a unified budget request to the Governor and state legislature. There are 19 total Regents, 16 of whom are appointed by the Governor:

*Daniel Campbell, Chair*

*France Davis, Vice Chair*

*Jessellie Anderson*

*Nina Barnes*

*Bailey Bowthorpe*

*Leslie Castle*

*Wilford Clyde*

*Marlin Jensen*

*Patricia Jones*

*Steven Lund*

*Robert Marquardt*

*Steven Moore*

*Jefferson Moss*

*Robert Prince*

*Harris Simmons*

*Mark Stoddard*

*Teresa Theurer*

*Joyce Valdez*

*John Zenger*

## Commissioner of Higher Education

The Commissioner of Higher Education is the chief executive officer of USHE and is appointed by the Board of Regents. The Commissioner provides statewide leadership, makes policy recommendations to the Board of Regents, and executes Board of Regents policies and programs.

The Utah Higher Education Assistance Authority (UHEAA) and the Utah Educational Savings Plan (UESP) are also under the oversight of the Board of Regents, and both organizations help to guide Utahns through the higher education financial planning process.

*Commissioner of Higher Education David Buhler, PhD*

## Utah System of Higher Education

The Utah System of Higher Education is comprised of the eight public colleges and universities in the state:

### RESEARCH UNIVERSITIES

University of Utah—flagship; medical, dental, pharmacy, and law schools, etc. *President David Pershing*

Utah State University—land grant; 33 regional sites and campuses statewide *President Stan Albrecht*

### REGIONAL UNIVERSITIES

Weber State University *President Charles Wight*

Southern Utah University *President Scott Wyatt*

Dixie State University *President Richard "Biff" Williams*

Utah Valley University *President Matthew Holland*

### COMMUNITY COLLEGES

Salt Lake Community College *President Deneece Huftalin*

Snow College *President Gary Carlston*

