



August 19, 2022

## Utah College Advising Corps (UCAC): Review of 2021-22 Expansion

### Overview

College access advisers support high school students as they embark on their path to postsecondary education, whether that path leads to a technical college or degree-granting institution. The Utah College Advising Corps (UCAC) program provides a recent college graduate, to partner high schools, that help students determine possible future careers, guide them through institution admissions and financial aid applications, and connect them to their receiving institution. The UCAC program is part of the [National College Advising Corps](#) and has a proven record of success in increasing postsecondary participation rates, particularly among first-generation students.

In 2021, the Utah Legislature provided \$2.5 million of one-time money to support the expansion of UCAC. The Board of Higher Education also approved a transfer of program funds from the Utah Higher Education Assistance Authority (UHEAA) to the Commissioner’s Office for a three-year expansion of the program. This expansion is a major component of the Board’s broader K-16 strategy that will fundamentally change how Utah’s high school students access higher education and systematically remove barriers to access for first-generation and underrepresented students.

### UCAC Expansion Timeline

The following table shows a snapshot of all three growth phases of the UCAC expansion:

<p><b><u>Start: 2020-21 (actual)</u></b></p> <p>1 regional coordinator overseeing 13 advisers who oversaw <b>13</b> high schools in 5 school districts</p>	<p><b><u>Phase I: 2021-22 (actual)</u></b></p> <p>5 regional coordinators overseeing 48 advisers who oversaw <b>51</b> high schools in 21 school districts</p>
<p><b><u>Phase II: 2022-23 (goal)</u></b></p> <p>5 regional coordinators overseeing 60 advisers to oversee <b>86</b> high schools in 33 school districts</p>	<p><b><u>Phase III: 2023-2024 (goal)</u></b></p> <p>6 regional coordinators overseeing 67 advisers to oversee <b>93</b> high schools in 35 school districts</p>

## **Overview of the 2021-2022 UCAC Expansion (Phase I)**

### **Key Performance Indicators (KPI)**

During the 2021-22 school year, the UCAC program reached **20,505 Utah high school seniors, representing 41% of the Utah high school senior class.** The actual KPI results for the 2021-22 UCAC expansion are below, as a percentage of the 2022 UCAC graduating class:

1. One-to-one meetings with high school seniors: 73% (14,969 students)
2. Students submitting at least one college application with the support of an adviser: 70% (14,353 students/college applications)
3. Meaningful engagement with the family of a student: 26% (5,332 families of high school seniors)
4. Assistance in filling out the FAFSA: 25%\* (*at least* 5,126 students)
5. FAFSA completion rate: 37% (7,587 FAFSAs completed)

*\*Data collection was inconsistent for the FAFSA assistance KPI, resulting in an inaccurate count. This has been addressed for the 2022-23 school year.*

### **Successes**

#### *Program Growth and Implementation of Two Pilot Program Models*

In 2021, UCAC was expanded from 13 advisers to 48 advisers during the 2021-22 school year, making it the largest college advising program ever in the state, reaching **20,505 Utah high school seniors.** In 2021-2022, the Commissioner's office approved a salary increase for both access advisers and regional coordinators to attempt to keep pace with inflation. In addition, the UCAC program piloted two different advising models: a one-to-many model, where a single adviser serves multiple high schools; and a fully remote model. These pilots will be completed by Phase III to determine the effectiveness and sustainability of each model.

#### *Advising Quality and Reach*

During the 2021-22 school year, UCAC advisers **met one-on-one with 14,969 high school students** to discuss their postsecondary plans and provide continuing support and resources. This represents **73%** of the UCAC schools' class of 2022. In addition, **70% of that senior class submitted at least one college application** with the support of an adviser. Advisers are also tasked with meaningfully engaging with the families of the students they serve, to ensure the entire family is supported as their student navigates the postsecondary transition process. UCAC advisers had **meaningful engagements with the families of 5,332 high school students** (26% of the UCAC partner high school graduating class).

#### *FAFSA Completion*

High schools served by a UCAC adviser averaged a 37% FAFSA completion rate, **three percentage points higher than the FAFSA completion rates of schools without a UCAC adviser** (34%). Prior to the expansion, the statewide rate for FAFSA completion was 34.5%. UCAC advisers *increased* FAFSA completion in their schools by 2.5%, while schools without a UCAC adviser saw a *decrease* in FAFSA completions of 0.5%. (High schools are prioritized for the UCAC program in part due to historically low FAFSA completion rates, so this is even more significant than it may initially appear.)

Even so, it is important to acknowledge that [Utah still lags the nation in FAFSA completion rates](#), ranking 50<sup>th</sup> out of 51 states and Washington, D.C.

## **Challenges**

### *Adviser Recruitment and COVID-19*

The number one challenge for the Phase I expansion was recruitment. The UCAC program was expanded during a spike in the COVID-19 pandemic, making hiring, recruiting, and retaining advisers substantially more challenging. In the fall of 2021, many school districts had periods of online-only learning, which made on-the-ground advising more challenging as well, right when advisers were getting integrated into their school settings.

## **Looking Forward: 2022-23 UCAC Expansion (Phase II)**

### **Opportunities and Areas of Focus**

#### *Purposeful Integration of Technical Colleges*

Advisers are being comprehensively trained on how to advise students on technical college offerings and programs. This year, each regional cluster of advisers will receive an on-campus tour and training at the technical colleges in their region.

#### *Program Growth and Implementation of Pilot Program Models*

All 33 school districts, representing all 86 high schools for Phase II, have signed MOUs with the UCAC program. The program is on track for the Phase II implementation of the two pilot program models, with one virtual and two one-to-many advisers already hired.

#### *Adviser Recruitment*

Based on lessons learned in Phase I, a detailed recruitment and retention plan has been developed for Phase II. UCAC changed the required qualification credential of advisers to open the door to associate degree-credentialed advisers. A steady pace of growth is proving to be effective as new challenges arise.

#### *FAFSA Completion*

The Commissioner's office is working with the office of the Utah State Board of Education (USBE) to better identify systemic ways and supports for students in completing the FAFSA. More work needs to be done to increase Utah's FAFSA completion rates. College access advisers are one piece in a complicated equation.

## **Commissioner's Recommendation**

This is an information item only; no action is required.

## **Attachment**

**UCAC EXPANSION HIGH SCHOOLS - ANTICIPATED**

Start List: 2020-21	Phase I: 2021-22	Phase II: 2022-23	Phase III: 2023-24
Cottonwood HS	American Fork HS	Altamont HS	Altamont HS
Cyprus HS	Bear River HS	American Fork HS	American Fork HS
East HS	Ben Lomond HS	Bear River HS	Bear River HS
Granger HS	Bonneville HS	Beaver HS	Beaver HS
Highland HS	Box Elder HS	Ben Lomond HS	Ben Lomond HS
Hillcrest HS	Canyon View HS	Bonneville HS	Bonneville HS
Hunter HS	Clearfield HS	Box Elder HS	Box Elder HS
Kearns HS	Cottonwood HS	Bryce Valley HS	Bryce Valley HS
Pine View HS	Crimson Cliffs HS	Canyon View HS	Canyon View HS
Skyline HS	Cyprus HS	Clearfield HS	Clearfield HS
Taylorsville HS	Delta HS	Copper Hills HS	Copper Hills HS
West HS	Desert Hills HS	Cottonwood HS	Cottonwood HS
West Jordan HS	Dixie HS	Crimson Cliffs HS	Crimson Cliffs HS
	East HS	Cyprus HS	Cyprus HS
	Fremont HS	Delta HS	Delta HS
	Grand County HS	Desert Hills HS	Desert Hills HS
	Granger HS	Dixie HS	Dixie HS
	Grantsville HS	Duchesne HS	Duchesne HS
	Green Canyon HS	Dugway HS	Dugway HS
	Hillcrest HS	East HS	East HS
	Hunter HS	Escalante	Emery HS
	Hurricane HS	EskDale HS	Escalante
	Juab HS	Fremont HS	EskDale HS
	Kanab HS	Grand County HS	Fremont HS
	Kearns HS	Granger HS	Grand County HS
	Lake Powell HS	Grantsville HS	Granger HS
	Layton HS	Green Canyon HS	Grantsville HS
	Logan HS	Gunnison Valley	Green Canyon HS
	Mountain Crest HS	Highland HS	Green River HS
	Mountain View HS	Hillcrest HS	Gunnison Valley
	Ogden HS	Hunter HS	Highland HS
	Olympus HS	Hurricane HS	Hillcrest HS
	Orem HS	Juab HS	Hunter HS
	Payson HS	Kanab HS	Hurricane HS
	Pine View HS	Kearns HS	Juab HS
	Provo HS	Lake Powell HS	Kanab
	Ridgeline HS	Layton HS	Kearns HS
	Sky View HS	Logan HS	Lake Powell HS
	Skyridge HS	Manila HS	Layton HS
	Snow Canyon HS	Manti HS	Logan HS
	Springville HS	Milford HS	Manila HS
	Syracuse HS	Millard HS	Manti HS
	Taylorsville HS	Mountain Crest HS	Milford HS
	Timpview HS	Mountain View HS	Millard HS
	Tooele HS	North Sanpete HS	Monticello HS
	Uintah HS	North Sevier	Monument Valley HS
	Valley (orderville) HS	North Summit HS	Mountain Crest HS
	Water Canyon HS	Ogden HS	Mountain View HS
	West HS	Olympus HS	Navajo Mountain HS
	West Jordan HS	Orem HS	North Sanpete HS
	Woods Cross HS	Panguitch	North Sevier HS
		Parowan HS	North Summit HS
		Payson HS	Ogden HS

Start List: 2020-21	Phase I: 2021-22	Pine View HS (Continued) Phase II: 2022-23	Olympus HS (Continued) Phase III: 2023-24
		Piute HS	Orem HS
		Provo HS	Panguitch HS
		Rich HS	Parowan HS
		Richfield HS	Payson HS
		Ridgeline HS	Pine View HS
		Roy HS	Piute HS
		Sky View HS	Provo HS
		Skyline HS	Rich HS
		Skyridge HS	Richfield HS
		Snow Canyon HS	Ridgeline HS
		South Sevier HS	Roy HS
		Spanish Fork HS	San Juan HS
		Springville HS	Sky View HS
		Syracuse HS	Skyline HS
		Tabiona HS	Skyridge HS
		Taylorsville HS	Snow Canyon HS
		Timpview HS	South Sevier HS
		Tintic HS	Spanish Fork HS
		Tooele HS	Springville HS
		Uintah HS	Syracuse HS
		Union HS	Tabiona HS
		Valley (orderville) HS	Taylorsville HS
		Water Canyon HS	Timpview HS
		Wayne HS	Tintic HS
		Weber HS	Tooele HS
		Wendover HS	Uintah HS
		West Desert HS	Union HS
		West HS	Valley (orderville) HS
		West Jordan HS	Water Canyon HS
		Westlake HS	Wayne HS
		Woods Cross HS	Weber HS
			Wendover HS
			West Desert HS
			West HS
			West Jordan HS
			Westlake HS
			Whitehorse HS
			Woods Cross HS