



UTAH SYSTEM OF  
HIGHER EDUCATION

# MEMORANDUM

November 18, 2022

## Becoming Institutions of Belonging for Native and Indigenous Students, Staff, and Faculty

In September 2022, President Mortensen led a discussion about becoming Hispanic-Serving Institutions due to at least five USHE colleges and universities preparing for the federal Hispanic-Serving Institution (HSI) designation. Building off that conversation, this discussion will explore how USHE institutions are working to become institutions of belonging for Native and Indigenous students, staff, and faculty. Terrell Lamont Strayhorn is a leading academic in the field of 'belonging'. He defines it as “students’ perceived social support on campus, a feeling or sensation of connectedness, the experience of mattering or feeling cared about, accepted, respected, valued by, and important to the group (i.e., campus community) or others on campus (i.e., faculty, staff, peers)”.<sup>1</sup>

This discussion will explore existing institutional academic and financial aid supports created specifically for Native and Indigenous students. The conversation will also center student and faculty voices and lived experiences to highlight what is still needed to develop and sustainably foster campuses of belonging for Native and Indigenous students.

USU-Blanding is home to the largest number of enrolled Native and Indigenous students on their campus, with additional significant enrollment in Logan, Uintah Basin, and Price. Representing the Land-grant University, Associate Vice President Kristian J. Olsen will lead out on the topic bringing student and faculty voices to the center of the discussion.

### **Commissioner’s Recommendation**

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

---

<sup>1</sup> Strayhorn, T. L. (2018). College students’ sense of belonging: A key to educational success for all students. Routledge.