



UTAH SYSTEM OF
HIGHER EDUCATION

MEMORANDUM

November 18, 2022

Student Affairs Committee Report

The following is a summary of the discussion on barriers to completion at the Student Affairs Committee meeting on October 21, 2022:

Identifying Barriers to Completion through the Social Determinants of Student Success

Background: Social Determinants of Health

In 2008, the World Health Organization (WHO) published a framework called the “[Social Determinants of Health](#),” which details how the conditions in an individual’s environment affect their health, functioning, and quality of life. The five social determinants of health are:

1. Economic stability
 - a. Conditions: Stable employment, adequate wages, reasonable costs
2. Education access and quality
 - a. Conditions: Access to high-quality educational institutions
3. Healthcare access and quality
 - a. Conditions: Nutritious food, physical activity, physical health services, mental health services, health insurance
4. Neighborhood and built environment
 - a. Conditions: Adequate, consistent housing, safety, technology, transportation, childcare
5. Social and community context
 - a. Conditions: Sense of belonging

Social Determinants of Student Success: A New Lens for Student Success

The Colorado Department of Higher Education was the first to use the term “[social determinants of student success](#),” which considers the social determinants of health framework through a lens of student success. After all, “[while approximately 35% of students who leave an institution, part for academic reasons, the other 65% leave voluntarily for non-academic reasons](#).”

The social determinants of student success are the same as the social determinants of health. The framework recognizes that students do not participate in higher education in a vacuum but interact with and are shaped by their environment and the systems surrounding them, including social, governmental, economic, and educational systems.

Below are specific examples of social determinants of student success and their impacts on completion:

1. Healthcare access and quality
 - a. Condition: Nutritious food
 - i. 39% of USHE students are food insecure
 - ii. 1 in 5 USHE students is so food insecure they skip meals
 - iii. 1 in 4 US students have considered dropping out due to difficulty in affording food
 - iv. 1 in 3 US students knows someone who has dropped out due to food insecurity
 - b. Condition: Mental health
 - i. Students facing mental health challenges are twice as likely to leave without graduating
 - ii. One-third of all college non-completers cite mental health issues as a contributing factor for stopping out of their program
 - iii. 14% reported mental health as their primary reason for leaving college
2. Neighborhood and built environment
 - a. Condition: Childcare
 - i. 56% of parenting students miss at least one day of class per semester due to lack of childcare; 8% miss five or more days
 - ii. Only 18% of independent parenting students complete within 150% of time
3. Social and community context
 - a. Condition: Sense of belonging
 - i. Students who perceive themselves as belonging to a specific group or institution are more likely to persist

For more detail and references, see attached slides.

What is the Board's Role in the Social Determinants of Student Success?

While many of the social determinants are outside of the control of higher education, as they impact completion, higher education has a role in connecting students to resources, keeping programs affordable, and supporting students through to completion. Below are examples of how the social determinants line up with the Board's five-year strategic plan.

1. Economic stability
 - a. Condition: Stable employment, adequate wages
 - i. Board's role: Increase the completion rate of graduates in high-demand, high-wage programs
 - b. Condition: Reasonable costs
 - i. Board's role: Increase student ability to pay the cost of attendance
 1. Increase FAFSA completion
 2. Evaluate and prioritize state student financial aid

- ii. Board’s role: Increase the college-going rate of high school graduates
 - 1. Support institutions in helping students secure their basic needs (systemwide student wellness resource navigators)
- 2. Education access and quality
 - a. Condition: Access to high-quality educational institutions
 - i. Board’s role: increase the college-going rate of high school graduates
 - 1. Simplify institutional admissions
 - 2. Ensure high school students are meaningfully informed on higher education pathways, financial aid, scholarships, etc.
- 3. Healthcare access and quality
 - a. Condition: Nutritious food, physical activity, physical health services, health insurance
 - i. Board’s role: Support institutions in helping students secure their basic needs (systemwide student wellness resource navigators)
 - b. Condition: Mental health services
 - i. Board’s role: Ensure systemwide supports for student mental health
- 4. Neighborhood and built environment
 - a. Condition: Adequate, consistent housing, safety, technology, transportation, childcare
 - i. Board’s role: Support institutions in helping students secure their basic needs (systemwide student wellness resource navigators)
 - ii. Board’s role: Ensure systemwide institutional supports for campus safety
- 5. Social and community context
 - a. Condition: Sense of belonging
 - i. Board’s role: LGBTQ+, Juneteenth, Dreamers resolutions

Other Committee Discussion Items

Campus Safety and Equity Student Advisory Council (CSEAC)

Student board member Xitlalli Villanueva presented on the Campus Safety and Equity Advisory Council, which the Board formally established in November 2021. It serves as an organized feedback group of students from diverse backgrounds, identities, and lived experiences to ensure institutional and state-level safety and equity-related policies, procedures, and programs successfully capture the perspective of students pursuing their education at Utah’s degree-granting public colleges and universities. In CSEAC’s first 2022-2023 meeting (September 24), members met and built rapport with one another and engaged in an activity to identify their top areas of interest on equity and safety, which will help determine a schedule of dialogue topics for the coming year.

Simplified Admissions Taskforce update

The Simplified Admissions Taskforce continues to work toward recommendations around a common application process. The Taskforce has split into two subcommittees—Common Application and Process and Access and Equity—to consider high-level opportunities and impacts for this initiative. The Taskforce

will present recommendations to the Student Affairs Committee on December 16, 2022, for the Committee's consideration.

Update: Letter of Support to USBE for FAFSA business case

Thanks to advocacy from the Board of Higher Education, the FAFSA business case that the Utah State Board of Education had voted down was reconsidered at their meeting on October 7 and ultimately passed the board to be on their list of priorities for the 2023 legislative session. Chair Scott Theurer expressed his appreciation for the work of the Board in helping this to happen, and presidents expressed their willingness to support the proposal during the legislative session.

Utah College Application Week and FAFSA Nights

The Commissioner's office coordinates two statewide programs, Utah College Application Week (UCAW) and FAFSA completion events, that support high school students in the transition to postsecondary education. This year has seen historic growth in the programs, with each program reaching the largest number of schools to date.

UCAW: The purpose of UCAW is to provide every high school senior the opportunity to apply to college with the help of a knowledgeable volunteer, educator, or adviser. UCAW grew from 134 high schools in 2021-2022 to **147 high schools** participating in 2022-2023. In addition, the Commissioner's office has worked with Keys to Success to develop the College Application Checklist, which interactively walks users through the steps necessary to prepare for college and is utilized as a tool during the UCAW event.

FAFSA Nights: FAFSA completion events assist students in filling out the FAFSA with the support of volunteers and experts. To aid in the FAFSA efforts within Utah, USHE coordinates with high schools to host FAFSA completion events to give high school seniors and their families a place to get help while completing the FAFSA application. During the 2021-2022 school year, there were 139 USHE FAFSA events statewide. This 2022-2023 school year has **156 USHE FAFSA events scheduled**, with over 180 USHE-trained volunteers participating. About 138 of those events will happen in October, the month when the FAFSA opens.

Regional College Access Partners (RCAP)

The committee heard a presentation on progress toward facilitating regional collaboration with college access partners, which has evolved into the RCAP initiative. The purpose of RCAP is to create a dedicated time and space for college access professionals to meet in regional networks. Each RCAP network is chaired by a regional coordinator from the Utah College Advising Corps (UCAC). These meetings provide partners the opportunity to:

- Develop relationships
- Understand each other's roles in college access and leverage each other's expertise
- Participate in training customized to their needs and interests

- Collaborate toward achieving equitable college access outcomes for students in their respective regions

[More information on each of these topics is available in the Committee agenda documents.](#)

Attachment



SOCIAL DETERMINANTS OF STUDENT SUCCESS (SDOSS)

October 21, 2022



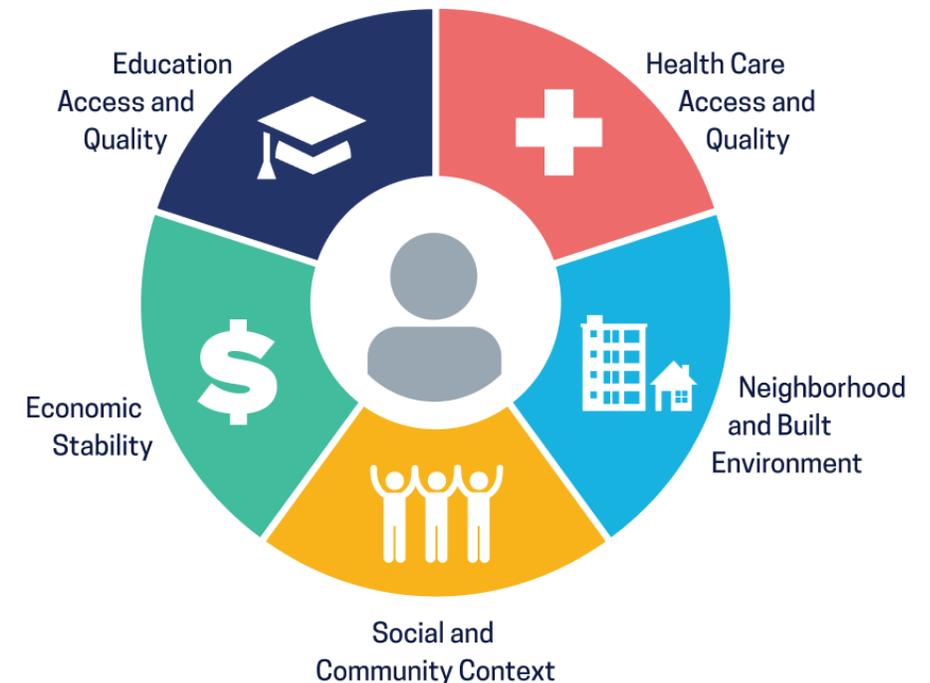
UTAH
SYSTEM OF
HIGHER
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Framework

Social Determinants of Health (SDOH)

SDOH are the conditions in the environments where people live that affect, for better or worse, their health, functioning, and quality of life

Social Determinants of Health



What helps people succeed? (SDOH)

ECONOMIC STABILITY

- Stable employment
- Adequate wages
- Reasonable costs

EDUCATION ACCESS & QUALITY

- Access to high-quality educational institutions

HEALTHCARE ACCESS & QUALITY

- Nutritious food
- Physical activity
- Physical health services
- Mental health services
- Health insurance

NEIGHBORHOOD & BUILT ENVIRONMENT

- Adequate, consistent housing
- Safety
- Technology
- Transportation
- Childcare

SOCIAL & COMMUNITY CONTEXT

- Sense of belonging

What helps students complete? (SDOSS)

ECONOMIC STABILITY

- Stable employment
- Adequate wages
- Reasonable costs

EDUCATION ACCESS & QUALITY

- Access to high-quality educational institutions

HEALTHCARE ACCESS & QUALITY

- Nutritious food
- Physical activity
- Physical health services
- Mental health services
- Health insurance

NEIGHBORHOOD & BUILT ENVIRONMENT

- Adequate, consistent housing
- Safety
- Technology
- Transportation
- Childcare

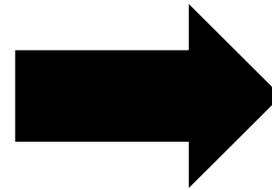
SOCIAL & COMMUNITY CONTEXT

- Sense of belonging

Impacts on Completion

HEALTHCARE ACCESS &
QUALITY

Nutritious food



1 in 4

US students have considered dropping out due to difficulty affording food

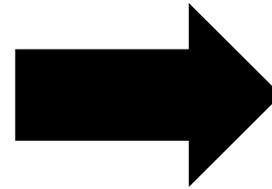
1 in 3

Know someone who has dropped out due to food insecurity

Impacts on Completion

HEALTHCARE ACCESS & QUALITY

Mental health services



The Healthy Minds Study reveals that across all types of campuses, students facing mental health challenges are

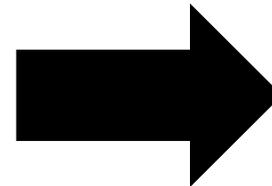
**twice as likely to
leave without
graduating**

even after accounting for prior
academic record and other
characteristics

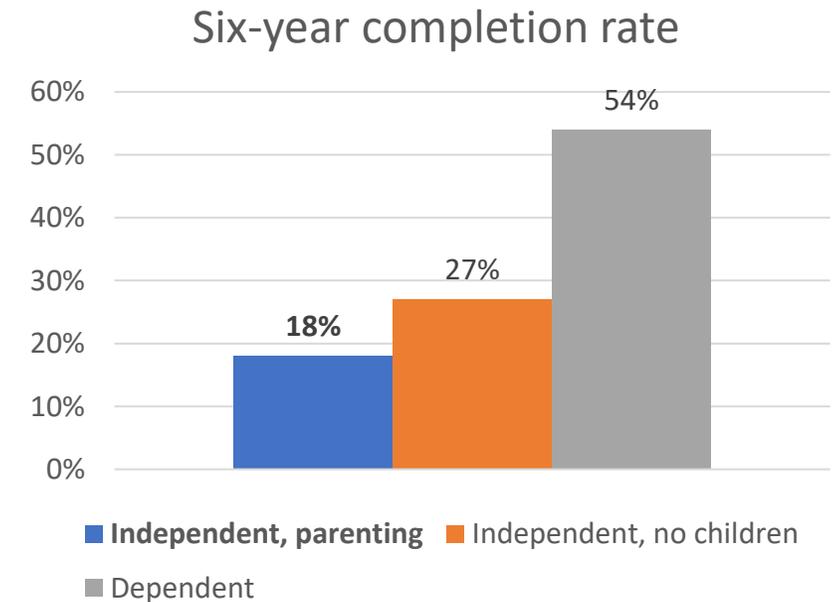
Impacts on Completion

NEIGHBORHOOD & BUILT ENVIRONMENT

Childcare



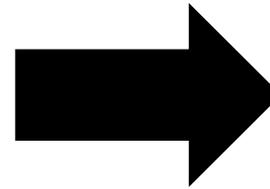
56% of parenting students miss at least one day of class per semester due to lack of childcare. 8% miss five or more days:



Impacts on Completion

SOCIAL & COMMUNITY CONTEXT

Sense of belonging



"Students who perceive themselves as belonging to a specific group or institution generally are more likely to persist because it leads not only to enhanced motivation but also a willingness to become involved with others in ways that further promote persistence."

“While approximately 35% of students [who leave a university] part for academic reasons, the other 65% leave a university voluntarily for non-academic reasons.”

Guests

On basic needs and completion:

**Sarah Elizabeth
Garza-Levitt**

*Associate Director of the Basic
Needs Collective -
University of Utah*

On mental health and completion:

Del Beatty

*Vice President of Student
Affairs -
Utah Tech University*

On belonging and completion:

Emma E. Houston

*Assistant Vice President for EDI
and Chief Diversity Officer –
University of Utah*

SDOSS and the Board

ECONOMIC STABILITY

SDOSS conditions

Stable employment
Adequate wages



Workforce Alignment

Increase the completion rate of graduates in high-demand, high-wage programs

- Increase higher education participate rate of adults
- Increase student participation in work-based learning

Reasonable costs



Affordability

Increase student ability to pay the cost of attendance

- Increase FAFSA completion
- Evaluate and prioritize state student financial aid



Access

Increase the college-going rate of high school grads

- Support institutions in helping students secure their basic needs

EDUCATION ACCESS & QUALITY

SDOSS conditions

Access to high-quality educational institutions



Examples of how the Board's work helps facilitate those conditions



Access

Increase the college-going rate of high school grads

- Simplify institutional admissions processes
- Ensure high school students are meaningfully informed on dual enrollment programming

HEALTHCARE ACCESS & QUALITY

SDOSS conditions

Nutritious food

Physical activity

Physical health services

Health insurance



Examples of how the Board's work helps facilitate those conditions



Access

Increase the college-going rate of high school grads

- Support institutions in helping students secure their basic needs
- *Deploy staff to case manage with students in need of institutional and external basic needs services*

Increase the timely completion of degrees and awards



Completion

- Ensure systemwide institutional supports for student mental health

Mental health services



NEIGHBORHOOD & BUILT ENVIRONMENT

SDOSS conditions

Adequate, consistent housing

Safety

Technology

Transportation

Childcare



Examples of how the Board's work helps facilitate those conditions



Access

Increase the college-going rate of high school grads

- Support institutions in helping students secure their basic needs
 - *Deploy staff to case manage with students in need of institutional and external basic needs services*



Completion

Increase the timely completion of degrees and awards

- Ensure systemwide institutional supports for campus safety

SOCIAL & COMMUNITY CONTEXT

SDOSS conditions

Sense of belonging



Examples of how the Board's work helps facilitates those conditions



- LGBTQ+ Resolution
- Juneteenth Resolution
- Positive Impact of Dreamers Resolution

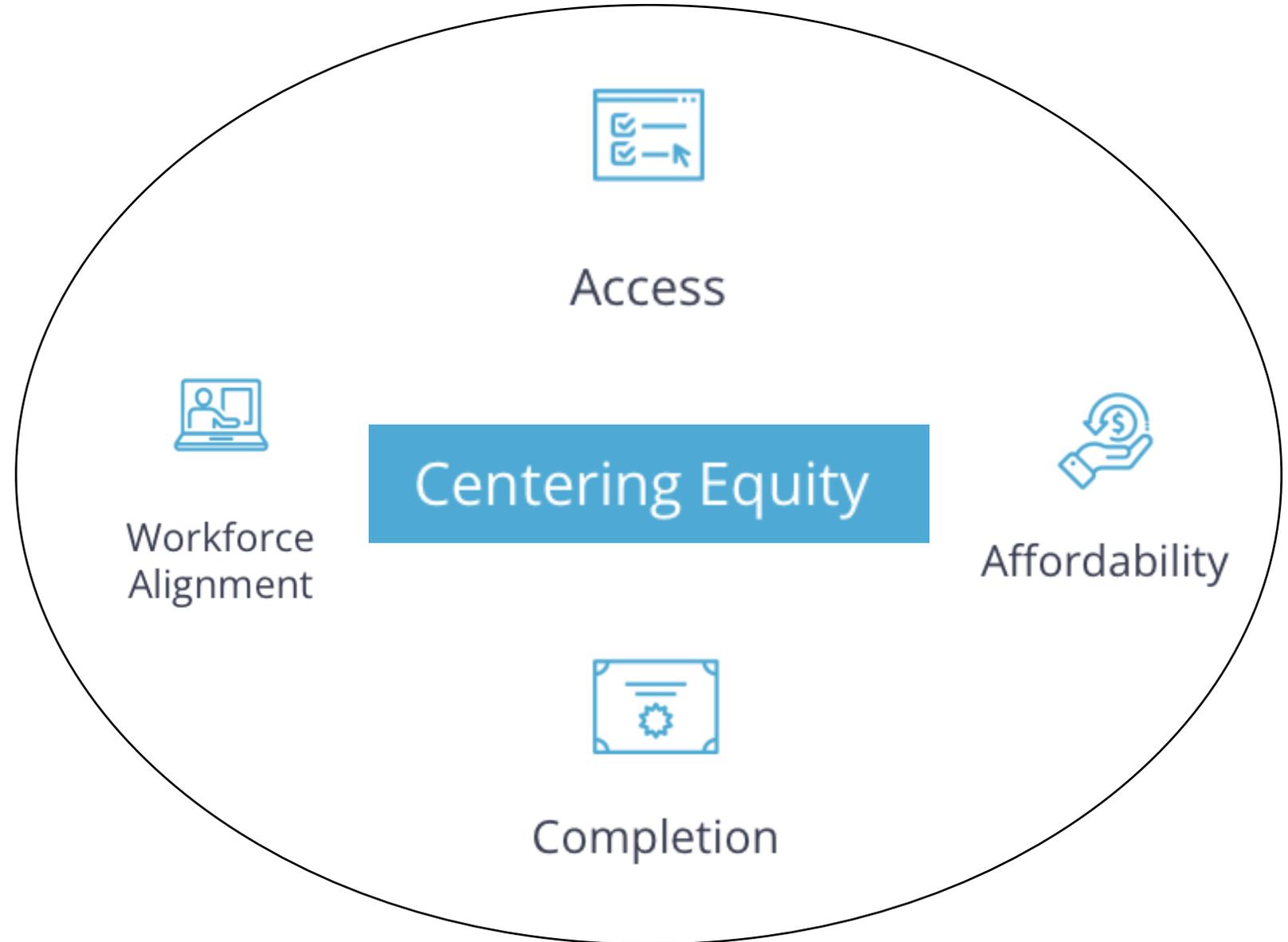
ECONOMIC STABILITY

EDUCATION ACES & QUALITY

HEALTHCARE ACCESS & QUALITY

NEIGHBORHOOD & BUILT ENVIRONMENT

SOCIAL & COMMUNITY CONTEXT



Call to action

- Please consider attending:
 - JED Summit (November 3)
 - Higher Education Food Summit (November 11)

Moving forward, how do we keep amplifying the conversation of completion through the lens of Social Determinants of Student Success?