



## Attachment A

### Utah System of Higher Education Workforce Preparedness & Alignment Study Services Agreement

This Services Agreement (“Agreement”) is made and entered into this 6th day of May 2024 by and between the Utah Board of Higher Education (the "Board") and Cicero (the “Consultant”), a consulting and research firm headquartered in Salt Lake City, Utah. The Board and Consultant are collectively referred to herein as "Parties", or individually, as a "Party".

WHEREAS, in consideration of the mutual promises, conditions, and undertakings set forth herein, and for other good and valuable consideration, the receipt and sufficiency of which are hereby acknowledged, the Parties agree as follows:

1. **Scope of Work:** Subject to and in accordance with the provisions of the Agreement, Attachment A, and Attachment B, and consistent with RFP # UU182220423, the Consultant will provide, and the Board wishes to obtain a statewide study on the effectiveness of graduates produced by the Utah System of Higher Education focused on Utah Employers (the “Services”). The Consultant is tasked with conducting a comprehensive statewide study to assess the effectiveness of higher education graduates in the workforce, with a specific focus on gathering insights from employers in key industries. This study will help identify areas of improvement and sustainment to provide recommendations for enhancing higher education's responsiveness and alignment with the needs of employers in Utah.

All Services provided by the Consultant under this Agreement shall be provided in a competent, prompt, and professional manner. Consultant agrees to cooperate in good faith with the Board in connection with the resolution of any concerns that may arise with respect to any of the Services.

- a. **Objectives:** The primary objectives of the workforce preparedness and alignment study are:
  - a) To collect and define the expectations Utah private sector leaders have of graduates from Utah higher education institutions.
  - b) To evaluate the quality, preparedness, and effectiveness of graduates from the Utah System of Higher Education.
  - c) To understand the specific needs and expectations of employers in key industries, including Healthcare, Life Sciences, Aerospace, Financial Services, Computer Sciences, Advanced Manufacturing, Energy, Transportation, and Construction.
  - d) To provide actionable recommendations to improve the alignment of higher education with the needs of employers in Utah.

- b. **Methodology:** Information about the methodology approach is found in Attachment A. The Consultant will employ a mixed-method approach to gather comprehensive data both quantitative and qualitative, which may include, but is not limited to:
- a) Surveys: Developing and distributing online/phone surveys to employers within the specified industries.
  - b) In-depth Interviews: Conduct interviews with key stakeholders, including executives, HR personnel, and other relevant individuals from selected employers.
  - c) Focus Groups: Organizing and moderating focus group discussions with representatives from different industries.
  - d) Document Review: Analyzing existing reports, publications, and other relevant documents related to the effectiveness of higher education.
  - e) Site Visits: Visiting selected higher education institutions to assess on-campus career resources and practices.
- c. **Scope:**
- i. Geographical Focus: The study will cover the entire state of Utah.
  - ii. Stakeholder Engagement: The Consultant will engage with the USHE office, state employers, public education and higher education institutions from a workforce perspective, and relevant government agencies from a workforce perspective.
  - iii. Data Analysis: The Consultant will perform a detailed analysis of the collected data to draw meaningful conclusions and make recommendations.
  - iv. Industry Focus: The study will survey the various North American Industry Classification System (NAICS) codes that represent the economic census.
    - 1. The study will do a drill down on the following industries: Healthcare, Life Sciences, Aerospace, Financial Services, Computer Sciences, Advanced Manufacturing, Energy, Transportation, Construction, and Education.
    - 2. There are twenty sectors included in the NAICS. The Consultant and Talent Ready Utah will identify specific NAICS codes to study that support the previously listed industries.

Sector	Description
11	Agriculture, Forestry, Fishing and Hunting
21	Mining, Quarrying, and Oil and Gas Extraction
22	Utilities
23	Construction
31-33	Manufacturing
42	Wholesale Trade
44-45	Retail Trade
48-49	Transportation and Warehousing

51	Information
52	Finance and Insurance
53	Real Estate and Rental and Leasing
54	Professional, Scientific, and Technical Services
55	Management of Companies and Enterprises
56	Administrative and Support and Waste Management and Remediation Services
61	Educational Services
62	Health Care and Social Assistance
71	Arts, Entertainment, and Recreation
72	Accommodation and Food Services
81	Other Services (except Public Administration)
92	Public Administration ( <i>not covered in economic census</i> )

2. **Deliverables:** The Consultant will provide the following deliverables to the Board:
  - a) Interim Progress Report: A mid-study report outlining the progress made, data collected, and preliminary findings.
  - b) Draft Report(s): Comprehensive draft report(s) detailing the study's methodology, findings, and recommendations for review and feedback.
  - c) Final Report: A final report, incorporating feedback, presenting the study's results, and providing actionable recommendations for higher education institutions in Utah to improve alignment with the needs of employers in Utah.
  
3. **Compensation for Services:** The Board shall pay the Consultant \$128,060 for the completion of the Services. The compensation includes all expenses related to the Services and no expenses of any kind relating to the Services may be separately charged to the Board without the Board's prior written approval.

If the Parties agree in writing that any expenses relating to the Services shall be reimbursed by the Board, the following shall apply: (i) all such expenses to be reimbursed by the Board must be actually incurred, reasonable, and necessary to the performance of the Agreement, and may in no event include office overhead or salaries or any items or expenses for which Consultant receives reimbursement from third parties; (ii) long-distance travel and lodging shall be coordinated in advance with the Board and shall not be initiated without the Board's prior approval in each case; (iii) if the costs of any hardware, software, or equipment or services (other than the Services) are to be reimbursed to Consultant, the Board must have consented in writing in advance to the specific hardware, software, equipment, or services, and to the cost thereof, and consented in writing in advance that the cost of these specific items is not included in the compensation and may be separately charged to the Board; (iv) any invoice requesting reimbursement shall itemize in reasonable detail the incidental expense for which reimbursement is requested, and (v) upon the Board's request, Consultant shall promptly (and in no event later than ten calendar days following written request from the Board) provide

supporting receipts or other reliable back-up documentation for any expense invoiced to the Board. All compensation and permitted reimbursable expenses shall be paid by the Board in accordance with all applicable University policies and procedures and shall be based upon invoices submitted by the Consultant.

4. **Term:** The term of this Agreement shall commence on May 13, 2024, and shall continue until October 31, 2024, unless earlier terminated as permitted herein.
5. **Timeline:** This includes a 12-16 week study and project reports. Consultant shall provide to the Board:
  - a) Project Initiation: May 13, 2024
  - b) Interim Progress Report: July 12, 2024
  - c) Data Collection and Analysis: May 20, 2024 - August 30, 2024
  - d) Draft Report Submission: September 30, 2024
  - e) Final Report Submission: October 31, 2024
6. **Governance:** The Consultant will work closely with the Utah Commissioner of Higher Education and the Associate Commissioner of Talent Ready Utah to ensure project alignment with objectives and expectations.
7. **Confidentiality:** The Consultant will treat all collected data, information, and discussions with employers and higher education institutions as confidential and shall not disclose such information without explicit consent or as required by Utah law, federal law, and Attachment B.

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**Cicero Point of Contact:** Aaron Andersen, [aandersen@cicerogroup.com](mailto:aandersen@cicerogroup.com)

By accepting this Agreement, the Consultant agrees to adhere to its terms and conditions in this Agreement, Attachment A, and Attachment B.

This Agreement may be signed in counterparts, each of which shall constitute an original with the same effect as if the signatures are both on the same instrument. The Parties may sign and deliver this Agreement by facsimile or other electronic means, such as e-mail.

CICERO

UTAH BOARD OF HIGHER EDUCATION

Signature:

Signature:

Name:

Name:

Title:

Title:

Date:

Date:

## Attachment A: Mixed Methodology Concepts

### Survey

*Surveys should contain comprehensive data both quantitative and qualitative. The following questions are to be integrated into the workforce preparedness & alignment study but are not meant to be an all-inclusive list. Other questions the Consultant recommends can be integrated into the study.*

Select one or more of the following.

- My organization hires graduates from the State's Technical Colleges.
- My organization hires graduates from the State Institutions at an Associate's degree level.
- My organization hires graduates from the State's Colleges/Universities at the Bachelor's degree level.
- My organization hires graduates from the State's Colleges/Universities at the Post-Graduate Level.
- My organization participates in Work-based learning with students such as apprenticeships, internships, externships, co-ops, etc.
- My organization participates in Industry Advisory Councils/Committees at one of the Technical Colleges and/or Degree Granting Institutions.

### Quantitative Analysis

#### Technical Skills

- How important is the possession of technical skills for graduates of higher education? (1 = Not Important, 5 = Moderately Important, 10 = Extremely Important)
- How would you rate the workforce readiness of recent graduates from higher education for roles within your organization? (1 = Not Prepared, 5 = Moderately Prepared, 10 = Highly Prepared)
- On a scale from 1 to 10, what is the extent to which recent graduates possess the specific skills or competencies required for their roles in your organization? (1 = Lacking, 5 = Moderately Competent, 10 = Fully Competent)
- How would you rate the proficiency of recent graduates in a specific technology or digital skills critical for your industry? (1 = Inadequate, 5 = Adequate, 10 = Highly Proficient)
- On a scale from 1 to 10, how effectively do higher education institutions equip graduates with knowledge of industry-specific regulations and compliance standards? (1 = Ineffective, 5 = Effective, 10 = Highly Effective)
- How well do recent graduates apply theoretical knowledge from their academic studies to practical tasks within your organization? Rate on a scale from 1 to 10. (1 = Poor Application, 5 = Moderate Application, 10 = Strong Application)
- How effective are Work-Based learning opportunities such as internships, apprenticeships, externships, co-op programs, or experiential learning opportunities in preparing students for the workforce in your industry? (1 = Ineffective, 5 = moderately effective, 10 = Highly Effective)
- How effective do you think higher education institutions are at staying updated with the evolving demands of your industry to ensure that graduates are better prepared? (1 = Ineffective, 5 = Moderately Effective, 10 = Highly Effective)
- How satisfied are you with the quality and relevance of coursework provided by higher education institutions as it pertains to the needs of your organization? Rate on a scale from 1

to 5. (1 = Dissatisfied, 5 = Very Satisfied) Do you have recommendations to higher education institutions to improve program alignment with the needs of employers? (1 = Few Recommendations, 10 = Many Recommendations)

- How effective is the feedback loop between your organization and higher education institutions in addressing the skill and knowledge needs of your industry? (1 = Ineffective, 5 = Effective, 10 = Highly Effective)
- How often have you observed significant gaps in the skills or preparedness of recent graduates? (1 = Frequently, 5 = Occasionally/Rarely, 10 = Never)
- How often do you believe there are opportunities for higher education institutions to enhance the employability of their graduates? (1 = Frequently, 5 = Occasionally/Rarely, 10 = Never)
- Over the last 5 years, please quantify the number of recent graduates who lack industry-specific skills or certifications important for your organization.
- Over the last 5 years, please quantify the number of recent graduates who have excelled in your organization and describe the characteristics or qualities that made them stand out.
- Please quantify the number of recent graduates who required additional training or certification upon joining your organization to meet industry-specific standards.
- Please provide data regarding the retention rates of recent graduates within your organization and how that may be related to their preparedness and skills.

### **Interpersonal Skills**

- On a scale from 1 to 10, rate the importance of soft skills and professional attributes in the success of recent graduates within your organization. (1 = Not Important, 5 = Important, 10 = Highly Important)
- How would you rate the adaptability and problem-solving abilities of recent graduates when facing real-world challenges within your organization? (1 = Poor, 5 = Moderate, 10 = Excellent)
- How well do recent graduates demonstrate leadership and decision-making abilities in your organization? (1 = Weak, 5 = Moderate, 10 = Strong)
- How well do recent graduates demonstrate ethical decision-making and professionalism in your organization? (1 = Poor, 5 = Moderate, 10 = Excellent)
- How well do recent graduates demonstrate adaptability to different work environments and company cultures? (1 = Poor, 5 = Moderate, 10 = Excellent)
- How proficient are recent graduates in project management and time management skills? (1 = Inadequate, 5 = Proficient, 10 = Highly Proficient)
- How often do recent graduates exhibit strong problem-solving and critical-thinking abilities in your organization? (1 = Frequently, 5 = Occasionally/Rarely, 10 = Never)
- Rate the communication and teamwork ability of recent graduates. (1 = Poor, 5 = Acceptable, 10 = Excellent)
- How crucial do you believe mentorship and on-the-job training are for recent graduates to transition into the workforce? (1 = Not Crucial, 5 = Moderately Crucial, 10 = Extremely Crucial)
- Rate the level of recent graduates' innovation and creativity in problem-solving within your organization on a scale from 1 to 5. (1 = Low, 5 = Moderate, 10 = High)
- In your experience, how well do recent graduates adapt to the fast pace of technological changes within your industry? Rate on a scale from 1 to 5. (1 = Poor Adaptation, 5 = Moderate Adaptation, 10 = Excellent Adaptation)

### **General Yes / No**

- Have you noticed any specific trends or changes in your industry that affect the skills and qualifications you seek in recent graduates? (Yes/No)
- Are you aware of how to connect with institutions? (Yes, No)
- Do you know the resources available at institutions for accessing talent? (Yes, No)
- Do you use job boards on institutions' websites to hire full-time staff or to promote internships? (Yes, No)
- Do you feel like your voice is heard regarding feedback on curriculum and talent needs? (Yes, No)
- Are students able to translate their skills acquired in education to their prospective employers? (Yes, No)
- Would you hire students with Micro-credentials in technical skills? (Yes, No)
- Would you hire students who completed a competency-based program? (Yes, No)
- Is higher education meeting your needs as an employer in Utah? (Yes, No)

### **Qualitative Analysis**

- Can you quantify the impact of specific projects or initiatives within your organization related to workforce development and education?
- How do you envision the future of workforce readiness and the partnership between higher education and employers in your industry?
- Can you describe the typical roles or positions within your organization that recent graduates from higher education fill?
- What specific skills, knowledge, or competencies do you expect from recent graduates in these roles?
- Have you observed any gaps in the skills or preparedness of recent graduates? If so, can you provide examples?
- Are there any industry-specific skills or certifications that you find lacking in recent graduates from higher education?
- What do you consider as the most important soft skills or professional attributes that recent graduates should possess for success in your organization?
- Can you describe any successful partnerships or collaborations you have had with higher education institutions to bridge the gap between academic training and workforce needs?
- Do you believe there are opportunities for higher education institutions to enhance the employability of their graduates? If so, how?
- Can you provide any examples of recent graduates who have excelled in your organization, and what characteristics or qualities made them stand out?
- How do you think higher education institutions can stay updated with the evolving demands of your industry to ensure that graduates are better prepared?
- Are there any emerging trends or changes in your industry that may impact the skills and qualifications you seek in recent graduates? What are they?
- What advice or recommendations would you provide to higher education institutions to improve the alignment of their programs with the needs of employers?
- Is there anything else you would like to add regarding the preparedness of graduates and their fit within your organization?