



Strategic Plan Proposed Edits (Redlined)

Vision: Utah is an innovative global leader in providing world-class higher education and advancing research that enhances the quality of life in the state.

Mission: USHE operates cohesively across the state's 16 public colleges and universities to provide valuable education that meets workforce needs and enhances the wellbeing and prosperity of all Utahns.

- **Priority:** Access

Goal: Increase the college-going rate of high school grads by 3% by the conclusion of academic year 2026-2027.¹

- **Strategy:** Ensure all prospective students are meaningfully informed about postsecondary access, enabling them to take full advantage of admissions opportunities, scholarships, financial aid, dual enrollment programming, and college and career pathways.
 - **Tactic:** In coordination with the Utah State Board of Education and other stakeholders, develop and implement comprehensive practices that ensure more K-12 students and adult learners pursue higher education and enhance their career opportunities.
- **Strategy:** Simplify institutional admissions processes.
 - **Tactic:** Adopt a statewide tool that comports with the Board's statutory responsibility to prioritize common applications and direct admissions. Create an effective governance and collaboration model to promote use of the tool and develop and report measurable outcomes related to the tool's impact on improving postsecondary access.
 - **Tactic:** Improve transactional data movement to support student transition to higher education, including facilitating the movement of data between high school students and institutions to improve the accuracy and efficacy of student record matching.

¹ This access goal uses academic year 2021-2022 as the baseline, when the share of Utah high school graduates who enrolled in a USHE institution within three years was 53.65%. This access goal also informs performance funding. Visit <https://ushe.edu/attainment-dashboards/> for data visualizations.

o **Strategy:** Ensure Utah’s public higher education system is best poised to serve modern learners.

- **Tactic:** Study why non-USHE graduates in specific high-wage, high-demand fields chose to attend institutions outside the System, and utilize findings to improve responsiveness to student needs.

• **Priority:** Completion

Goal: Increase timely completion of degrees and awards by 3% by the conclusion of academic year 2026-2027.²

- o **Strategy:** Innovate to mitigate or remove barriers that increase time to completion.
 - **Tactic:** Assist and incentivize institutions to develop appropriate sub-120-credit hour bachelor’s degrees.
 - **Tactic:** Facilitate transfer and completion among institutions within the System by strengthening educational pathways, requiring meaningful articulation, and completing the transition from clock to credit hours in technical education.
 - **Tactic:** Incentivize timely completion by ensuring that performance funding is invested in interventions that advance progress toward institutional timely completion goals.
- o **Strategy:** Standardize the awarding of credit for prior learning and ensure it aids in timely completion.
 - **Tactic:** Implement consistent practices for the awarding of credit for prior learning, including training of faculty and staff, and annual institutional reporting of credit awarded.
 - **Tactic:** Assess the impact of credit for prior learning on student enrollment and completion.
 - **Tactic:** Leverage access partners to ensure students capitalize on credit for prior learning opportunities.

• **Priority:** Financial Value

Goal: Maximize the return on investment and value proposition of a USHE education for all stakeholders.

- o **Strategy:** Develop and implement measures to reduce or avoid low-value expenditures and create systemwide financial efficiencies.

Commented [KMI]: From audit recommendation 1.3 (“OCHE should improve their decision making by working with institutions to identify why students choose to attend private non-traditional [private, for-profit] institutions and why institutions are losing market share for some programs.”)

Per our audit response:
“To the extent necessary, findings from this exercise [of studying program leakage] could be supplemented with primary data collection from student and local employers.”

² This completion goal uses academic year 2021-2022 as the [baseline](#), when the share of entering students who complete their programs within 150% of expected time was 48.8%. This completion goal also informs performance funding. Visit <https://ushe.edu/attainment-dashboards/> for data visualizations.

- **Tactic:** Develop, implement, and report outcomes of new shared service functions, with a focus on legislatively prioritized areas of technology, human resources, Title IX, and commercialization and areas that are most likely to result in budget savings, cost avoidance, and/or improved services.
 - **Tactic:** Study and develop best practices related to efficient utilization of existing spaces and ensure new capital development investments are aligned with System and institutional long-term plans and strategies.
 - **Strategy:** Reduce costs for students and help them maximize their return on investment.
 - **Tactic:** Manage a rigorous tuition- and fee-setting process that creates efficiencies on the expenditure side to keep costs as low as possible for students.
 - **Tactic:** Advance activities that increase FAFSA completion and student receipt of federal aid.
 - **Tactic:** Invest in, deploy, and refine state aid and scholarship programs.
 - **Tactic:** Increase student participation in high-quality work-based learning [that enhances their durable skills and workplace readiness.](#)
 - **Strategy:** Ensure the value of a USHE education is commensurate with the cost.
 - **Tactic:** [In collaboration with the Department of Workforce Services, curate and coordinate the use of regional and state workforce data to](#) assess student workforce outcomes at the program and discipline level [and to](#) inform targeted investments.
 - **Strategy:** Establish and [maintain a long-term plan for](#) cohesive institutional roles and missions to ensure [optimal workforce responsiveness and](#) systemwide efficiency.
 - **Tactic:** [In coordination with institutional presidents, establish and enforce more specific and forward-thinking roles for each institution that are informed by projections regarding demographic shifts, changes in workforce demand, and artificial intelligence and technology developments.](#)
 - **Tactic:** Align programs across institutions.
 - **Tactic:** [Compile a comprehensive report of unnecessarily duplicative programs, programs with low enrollment, and programs that no longer serve a market or systemwide need, and coordinate with institutional presidents to](#) eliminate unnecessary programs [duplication where appropriate.](#)
 - **Tactic:** Promote and incentivize program partnerships across institutions.

- **Priority:** Economic Development

Goal: Leverage higher education to fortify the state's economy, grow and develop industries, enhance Utahns' quality of life, and position the state as an innovative leader in the global economy.

Commented [KM2]: Recommendation following Cicero study findings.

Commented [KM3]: In response to audit recommendation 1.5 ("We recommend OCHE work with DWS to curate and coordinate use of regional and state workforce data to drive proper programmatic investment of taxpayer funds.")

Our audit response:
"In addition to our response to recommendation 1.1, the Office of the Commissioner of Higher Education will draw on its partnership with DWS to further expand the use of regional and state workforce data to inform program investments...This work is already underway, and while it will be ongoing, we anticipate demonstrated improvements within the next 12 months."

Commented [KM4]: In response to audit recommendation 2.2 ("We recommend the Utah Board of Higher Education create a long-term plan outlining the unique roles each degree-granting institution will fulfill over the next 20 years.")

Commented [KM5]: Phrasing from page 17/28-29 of the audit, recommendation 2.4 ("We recommend UBHE compile a report of unnecessarily duplicative programs across the system, programs with low student outcomes, and programs that no longer serve a market or systemwide need, then place this on a COP agenda for further discussion and coordination.")

From our audit response:
"We agree. Our approach to this recommendation is addressed primarily in our response to Recommendations 1.1 and 1.2. However, we appreciate the auditor recognizing the critical importance and role of presidents in determining which programs they offer and their shared responsibility in leading the system. Presidents have clear authority to eliminate programs, restructure academic units, and adjust academic budgets. Making decisions about which programs each institution offers is a shared obligation and should be done collaboratively and guided by the clear missions, roles, and performance criteria referenced in the responses to this audit."

- **Strategy:** Meet workforce needs by increasing the completion rates of graduates in high-wage, high-demand programs by [3%](#) by the conclusion of academic year 2026-2027.³
 - **Tactic:** Incentivize high-yield awards by providing students the most relevant and meaningful information about labor market outcomes.
 - **Tactic:** Ensure that performance funding is invested in interventions that advance progress toward institutional timely high-yield goals.
 - **Tactic:** Develop legislative priorities, policies, and funding requests for workforce development initiatives.
 - **Tactic:** Develop and promote workforce initiatives in collaboration with public education, industry, and state agencies.
- **Strategy:** Advance research that supports economic development and enhances the quality of life in the state.
 - **Tactic:** Incentivize USHE institutions to expand research that involves collaboration across multiple colleges and universities in the System.
- **Strategy:** In partnership with government and industry, advance commercialization and economic development through The Point Innovation District.
 - **Tactic:** Support the Associate Commissioner of Innovation in the execution of The Point Innovation District's strategic plan.

³ This high-yield graduates goal uses academic year 2021-2022 as the [baseline](#), when the share of graduates from programs leading to in-demand jobs was 71.2%. This high-yield graduates goal informs performance funding. This completion goal also informs performance funding. Visit <https://ushe.edu/attainment-dashboards/> for data visualizations.