



## **Utah Valley University Mid-Cycle Review**

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*to the  
Northwest Commission on  
Colleges and Universities*

*September 10, 2020*

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UTAH VALLEY UNIVERSITY

OFFICE of the PRESIDENT

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On behalf of Utah Valley University, it is my pleasure to welcome you (virtually) to our campus. UVU is an innovative force in higher education today, committed to improving the student experience continuously by providing education that is of high quality, accessible, affordable, engaging, personalized, and relevant.

Through its many iterations from a trade and technical college to a regional teaching university, UVU has been committed to providing transformational, engaged, and relevant educational offerings and



experiences for hundreds of thousands of students. Our integrated dual-mission approach—serving as an community college and teaching university under one roof—is a model that is gaining national and international attention. Welcoming all who seek learning at every level of preparation, this approach provides transformational opportunities to transform students’ lives. Our core values—exceptional care, exceptional accountability, and exceptional results—and our action commitments to include, engage, and achieve drive the success of the students and the university.

UVU’s mission to “educate every student for success in work and life through excellence in engaged teaching, services, and scholarship” has never been more critical. UVU made history with its Class of 2020, graduating the largest class during the pandemic. These graduates succeeded with resilience and open minds to new habits and new ways of learning that will enable them to make their ways in a world of tension and contradiction. Our graduates will face the challenges of their time with courage. I am proud of UVU’s graduates. I believe in their great potential and that of the university that has prepared them for a new world.

We continue to celebrate our successes in improved student achievement, student learning, and equity gaps. But we recognize that there is much more work to be done. We very much appreciate the involvement of our peers through the Northwest Commission on Colleges and Universities, which is critical to our continuing success. I invite you to engage with us as we continue to implement more effective and efficient opportunities for students to achieve their academic goals, live lives of productivity and dignity, and contribute to the health and vibrancy of our communities.

With best regards,

Dr. Astrid S. Tuminez  
President

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## 1 MISSION FULFILLMENT

### 1.1 UVU's Mission and Action Commitments

Utah Valley University's current mission statement was approved by the Utah State Board of Regents on May 17, 2019, following a six-month process of discussion and deliberation across the university:

Utah Valley University is an integrated university and community college that educates every student for success in work and life through excellence in engaged teaching, services, and scholarship.

UVU's innovative dual-mission approach to higher education integrates structures and practices under one roof that are typically separated into community colleges and teaching universities. It is central to upholding the institution's commitment to student success and engaged learning. Student success encompasses both completed degrees and the holistic education of students. UVU can fulfill this mission best in an environment that allows all individuals to thrive personally and professionally. To this end, UVU operates in accordance with three foundational values: exceptional care, exceptional accountability, and exceptional results. UVU's public brochure describing its mission statement, values, action commitments, and objectives is included as an appendix to this report.

Student success is the essence of UVU's mission and the focus of the mission statement. Three action commitments identify thematic areas of activity that lead toward fulfillment of the mission. Each action commitment is operationalized in three objectives identifying specific actions that UVU will take to achieve its mission. The objectives are ongoing, practical dimensions of the mission that are implemented in operational and organizational plans rather than specific, actionable goals for the university. Success is defined in relation to quantitative and qualitative indicators that assess achievement of the objectives.

UVU's three action commitments and nine objectives are as follows:

#### Include

UVU provides accessible and equitable educational opportunities for every student who wants to receive a rewarding postsecondary education.

- Objective 1: UVU integrates educational opportunities appropriate to both community colleges and universities.
- Objective 2: UVU provides accessible, equitable, and culturally diverse learning experiences and resources for students of all backgrounds, including those historically underrepresented in higher education.
- Objective 3: UVU fosters an inviting, safe, and supportive environment in which students, faculty, and staff can succeed.

#### Engage

UVU delivers rigorous, meaningful, and experiential learning opportunities driven by a shared responsibility for student success.

- Objective 1: UVU faculty, staff, and students practice excellent, engaged teaching and learning activities as a community of scholars, creators, and practitioners.
- Objective 2: UVU develops relationships and outreach opportunities with students, alumni, and community stakeholders.
- Objective 3: UVU employees demonstrate a commitment to student success, professionalism, ethics, and accountability.

## Achieve

UVU champions a university experience through which students can realize their educational, professional, and personal aspirations.

- Objective 1: UVU supports students in completing their educational goals.
- Objective 2: UVU students master the learning outcomes of the university and their programs.
- Objective 3: UVU prepares students for success in their subsequent learning, professional, and civic pursuits.

### 1.2 Mission Fulfillment Evaluation Process

#### Indicators of Success

UVU recognizes that mission fulfillment must be more than simply attaining specified values for key performance indicators. The university has been at the forefront of research into information justice and is committed to consciously considering how its selection of metrics inevitably embeds social values and practices into its evaluation process. Metrics are not, and can never be, purely objective or value neutral, so evaluation necessarily presents social justice considerations. UVU's commitment to evaluating with an equity lens insists that its evaluation process must be deliberative and pluralistic. The university achieves this by using multiple, deliberately incommensurable indicators of success in a triangulation methodology—a well-respected technique in the social sciences in which a research question is approached using multiple methodologies and the best explanation for the complete pattern of evidence is presented. UVU thus avoids dependence on the peculiarities of particular data definitions and achieves a pluralistic understanding of mission fulfillment that includes all students.

The University Planning Advisory Committee (UPAC) evaluates achievement of UVU's objectives and action commitments based on 39 indicators selected by UPAC as reliable and valid indicators of achievement. UPAC and President's Council have determined these indicators and operational measures are meaningful, assessable, and verifiable in accordance with NWCCU standards. Each indicator consists of a construct expected to be affected by success, an operationally defined measure, and a formalized quantitative or qualitative benchmark or other standard for success. UVU's Institutional Research Office collects and manages evaluation data for each indicator, which is publicly available [online on their webpage](#).

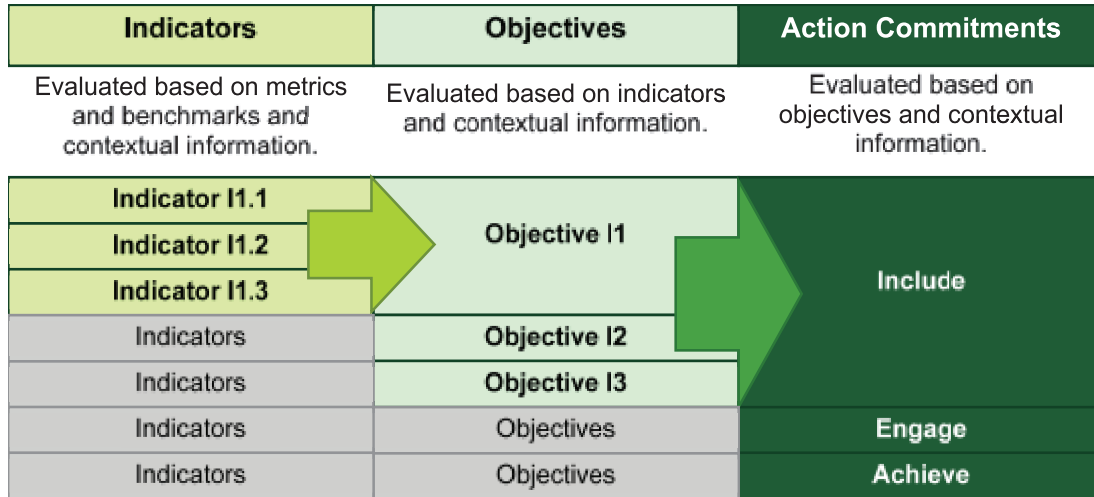
UPAC evaluates each indicator, objective, and action commitment on the extent to which the measures indicate that UVU fulfills each essential element of its mission. Rubrics adopted by UPAC in the 2018-19 academic year define operational standards for ratings of excellent, satisfactory, unsatisfactory, and developing at each level of the mission framework (indicators, objectives, and action commitments). This assessment is informed by data quality and additional evidence that contextualizes the indicator data. Evaluating the indicators forms the basis for evaluating each objective, with UPAC assigning a categorical rating and again considering additional contextual information. Evaluations of the objectives similarly lead to overall evaluation of the action commitment. The process for evaluating UVU's mission fulfillment process is illustrated in Figure 1.1. The evaluation rubric and metrics are included in the *2020 Mission Fulfillment Analysis Baseline Report*, an appendix to this report.

The assessment narrative for each objective and action commitment clarify the extent of mission fulfillment and identify strengths or opportunities for ongoing improvement. The narrative evaluations of each aspect of UVU's mission reflect the committee's professional judgment as to the best explanation for the full set of indicators and benchmarks. The evaluation of indicators, objectives, and action commitments thus provide a sophisticated picture of performance and support holistic and actionable assessment of mission fulfillment.

The completed evaluation is submitted to President’s Council for review and input before presentation to UVU’s Board of Trustees. Identified areas for improvement inform UVU’s ongoing planning efforts at the institution, school/college, and department levels and resource allocations.

**2020 Mission Fulfillment Analysis Baseline Report**

Over the 2019-20 academic year, UPAC conducted the first of three mission fulfillment evaluations



**Figure 1.1: UVU mission fulfillment evaluation structure**

scheduled during the current accreditation cycle. The purpose of the 2019-20 evaluation is threefold: to test the effectiveness of the evaluation process, to provide a baseline against which progress can be judged, and to identify priority areas for university action through 2024. The *2020 Mission Fulfillment Analysis Baseline Report* is included as an appendix to this report.

Overall, UPAC rated all action commitments and six out of nine objectives as satisfactory. UPAC rated Achieve: Objective 3 (post-graduation success) as excellent and rated Engage: Objective 3 (employee engagement) and Achieve: Objective 2 (assessment of student learning) as unsatisfactory. The committee rated 10 indicators as excellent, 20 satisfactory, 3 unsatisfactory, and 9 developing.

UPAC identified five major substantive findings:

1. UVU demonstrates great success overall in executing its integrated dual-mission educational model.
2. UVU’s students are important contributors to their communities and the state.
3. Completion is an area of both significant concern and significant potential.
4. Due to lack of institutional-level evaluation structures, UVU is currently unable to demonstrate that students achieve program learning outcomes.
5. Many employees perceive a lack of transparency and accountability.

In addition, the committee made several procedural recommendations to improve the effectiveness and value of the evaluation process in promoting institutional improvement.

UPAC will conduct a second evaluation in the 2021-22 academic year to evaluate progress. A final evaluation in the 2023-24 academic year will form the basis for UVU’s *2024 Evaluation of Institutional Effectiveness Report* to NWCCU.

## 2 STUDENT ACHIEVEMENT

Utah Valley University has identified student achievement measures for completion, retention, persistence, and postgraduation success. These overall measures, in combination with disaggregated data for institutionally meaningful equity gap categories, inform UVU’s planning, assessment, resource allocation, and improvement efforts.

### 2.1 Student Achievement Measures

Measures of student achievement are shown on UVU’s [online NWCCU performance measures dashboard](#).

#### Completion

UVU evaluates student achievement using the combined eight-year completion rate for the four IPEDS Outcome Measures cohorts (first-time/full-time; first-time/part-time; transfer/full-time; transfer/part-time). The Outcome Measures are an effective metric for UVU’s academically diverse student body and its core open-admission mission. UVU has large numbers of transfer and part-time students who would be excluded from other measures, and the eight-year time period better aligns with the success of UVU students who follow enrollment patterns that would be atypical of so-called “traditional” students. Many UVU students have significant family or work responsibilities impacting full-time and part-time status, and others find unexpected academic success while pursuing an associate degree and switch to pursuing a bachelor’s degree.

Based on past rates of improvements in completion, peer institution data, and state goals for higher education attainment, UVU has set an ambitious goal of a combined Outcome Measures completion rate of 45% by 2025. This goal is central to UVU’s *Vision 2030* strategic plan and *Completion Plan 2.0: Completion by Design*, which are included as appendices to this report.

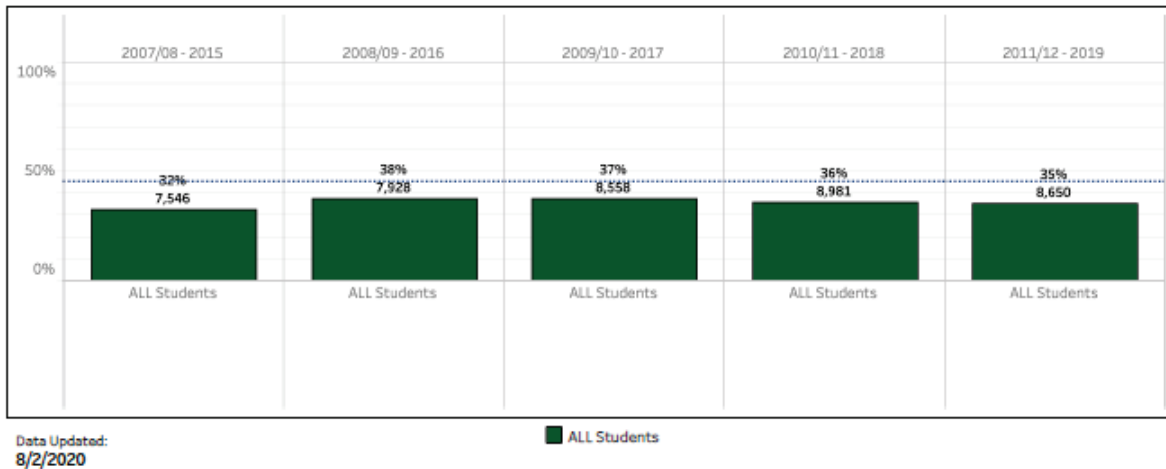


Figure 2.1: UVU IPEDS completion Outcome Measures history



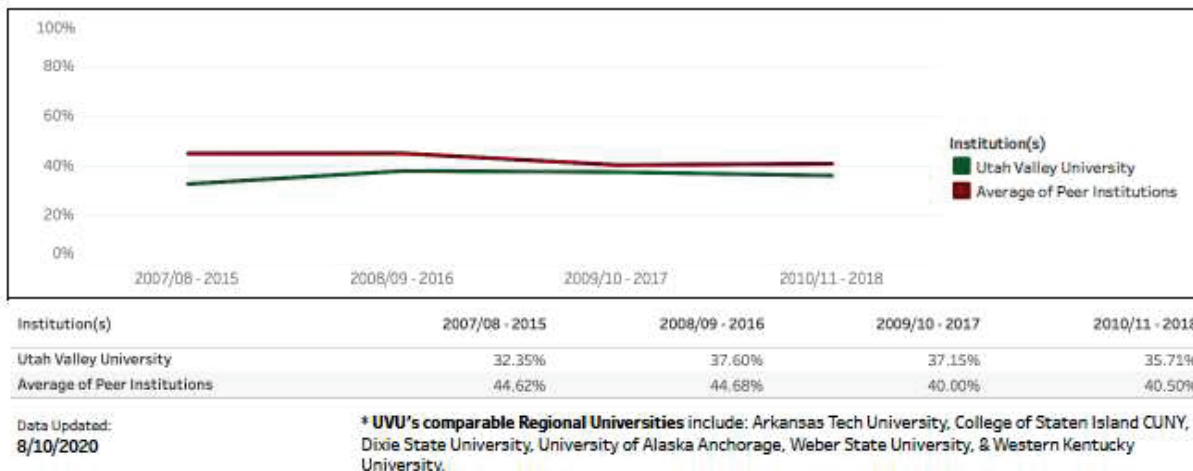


Figure 2.2: UVU IPEDS completion Outcome Measures history vs. peer group

UVU deliberately selected the Outcome Measures over the IPEDS Graduation Rate Survey (GRS) cohort 150%-time graduation rate (commonly referred to as the “GRS150”) as its standard measure for completion. Though a common national standard, graduation and retention metrics based on the IPEDS GRS cohort definition and the 150% time standard have well-known deficiencies that are unrepresentative of UVU’s student body and would be a significant factor in exacerbating equity gaps if used as UVU’s primary measure of student success. The GRS150 standard includes only first-time, full-time, post-high school, degree-seeking students entering in the fall (including students who enter in the preceding summer and continuing to fall). This excludes a large number of new-to-UVU students, including transfer students, part-time students, and students who enter in the spring. For example, UVU’s 2011 Fall cohort for the GRS is 3,249, while the more inclusive 2011-12 academic year cohort for Outcome Measures is 9,414. Typically, only 12% to 14% of all currently enrolled UVU students are included in an active GRS150 cohort; the rest are in cohorts older than 150% of program time, entered under conditions that excluded them from any GRS cohort upon entry, are high school concurrent enrollment students, or hold valid IPEDS exclusions. Students excluded from the GRS150 are disproportionately members of disadvantaged groups, particularly adult learners, which UVU considers to be a priority equity gap. To focus on the traditional students that are the focus of GRS cohort-based metrics would, UVU has determined, exacerbate rather than close equity gaps at UVU.

**Retention**

UVU evaluates retention using the IPEDS one-year retention rate for the GRS cohort. This includes incoming first-time, full-time, degree-seeking (at any degree level) students entering in the fall who are either enrolled at UVU the following fall or have completed a degree or certificate prior to that fall. Students with valid IPEDS exclusions who did not graduate are not included in the retention rate in accordance with IPEDS data definitions. Typically, several hundred UVU students in each cohort qualify for IPEDS exclusions after taking leaves of absence or otherwise leaving the university to serve religious missions.

Based on peer institution data and state goals for higher education attainment, UVU previously set a goal for 2025 of a 65% retention rate for students pursuing a bachelor’s degree. That goal was attained by the 2016 cohort and has remained within two percentage points of the goal since 2014.



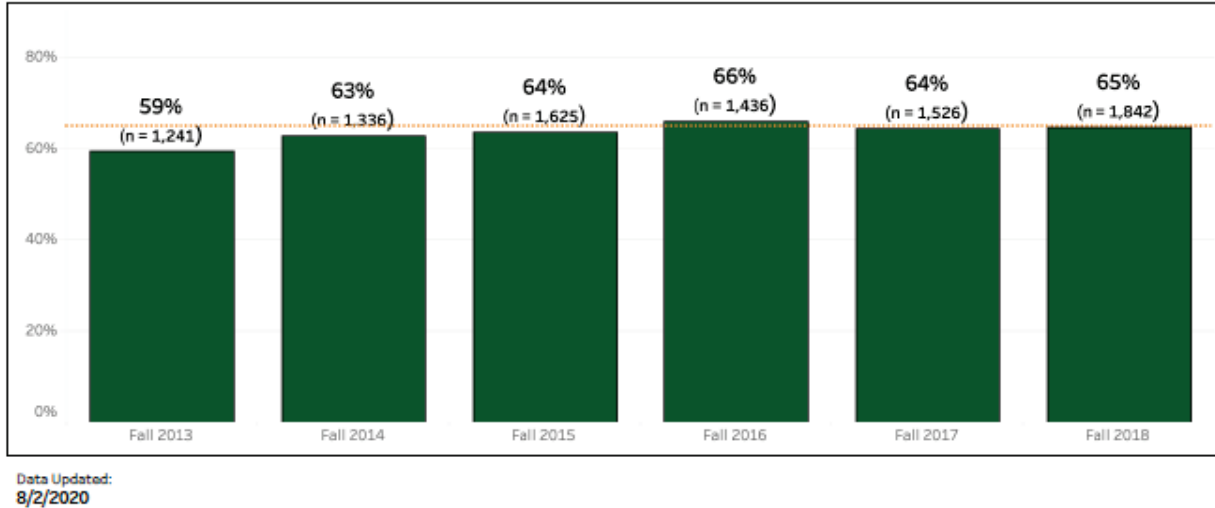


Figure 2.3: UVU IPEDS retention rate history

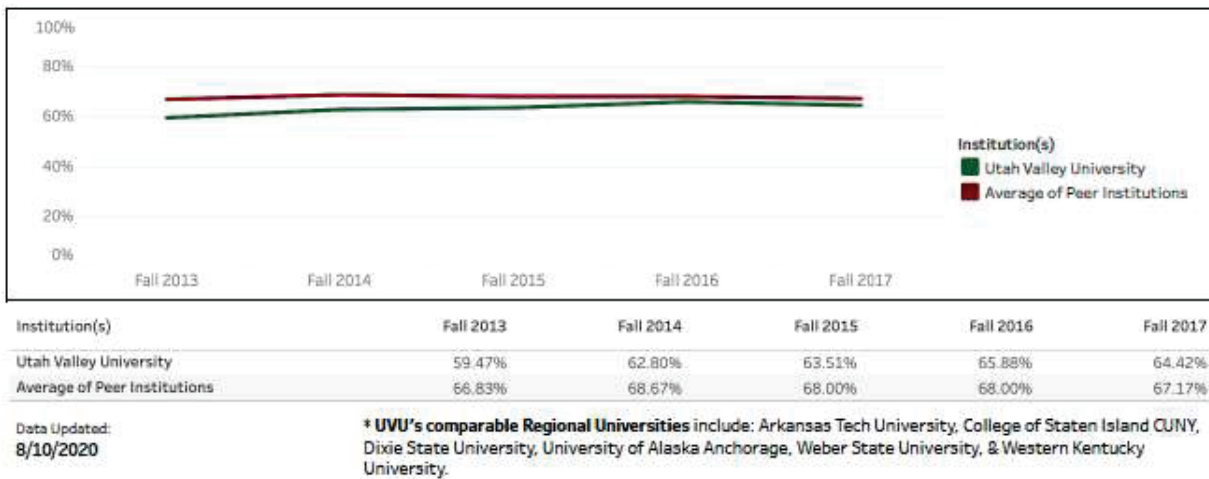


Figure 2.4: UVU IPEDS retention rate history vs. peers group

The weaknesses of GRS cohort-based metrics described above apply to retention data as well. Only 46% of UVU’s 2018 fall-entry students are included in the 2018 GRS cohort, a number further reduced by students entering in the spring and by high school concurrent enrollment students. Unlike completion, however, there does not appear to be any nationally available alternative to the IPEDS retention rate.

As the IPEDS retention rate is a standard element of institutional reporting, peer data is collected from the IPEDS Data Center for analysis.

**Persistence**

UVU evaluates persistence using the National Student Clearinghouse (NSCH) definition of persistence: “Continued enrollment (or degree completion) at any higher education institution—including one different from the institution of initial enrollment—in the fall semesters of a student’s first and second year.” This definition is operationalized using NSCH data on subsequent enrollment of UVU’s IPEDS GRS cohort. This includes all incoming first-time, full-time, degree-seeking students entering in the fall

who either are enrolled at UVU the following fall or have completed a degree or certificate prior to that fall. As with retention, students with valid IPEDS exclusions who did not graduate are not included in the persistence rate in accordance with IPEDS retention data definitions. The limitations of the IPEDS GRS cohort-based completion and retention rates are generally true of GRS cohort-based persistence rates as well.

**1 Year Persistence Rate:** Percent of incoming First-Time, Full-Time, degree-seeking students from a fall cohort who are enrolled at UVU (or another college) during the Fall term one year later OR who have completed any degree by that time. *Students with valid IPEDS exclusions who are not enrolled or who did not graduate are not included in the baseline number.*

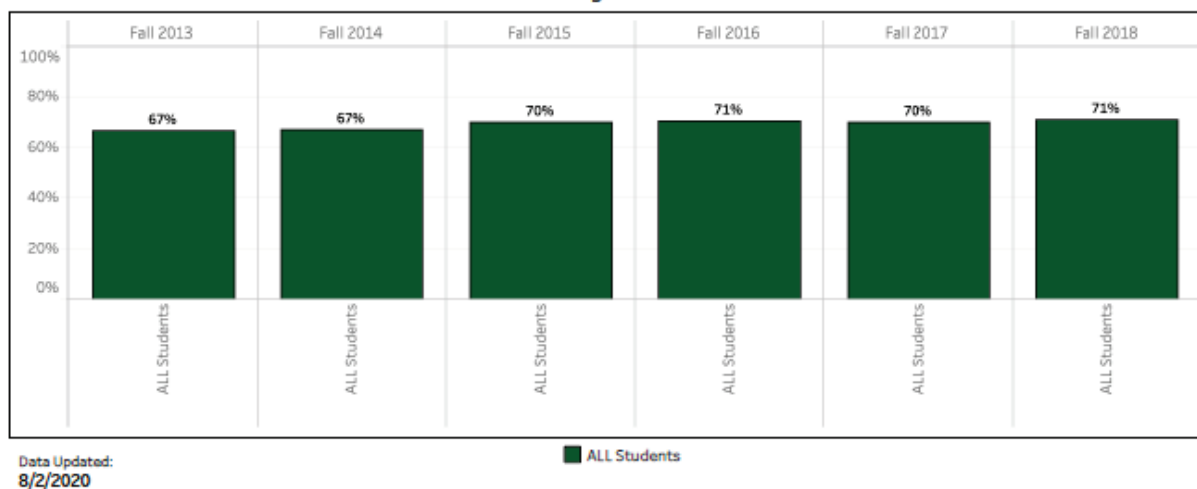


Figure 2.5: UVU persistence rate history

As persistence is not a nationally reported metric and requires institutional submission of student-level records to NSCH, peer data on persistence is not available.

### Post-Graduation Success

UVU evaluates post-graduation success using its annual Alumni Survey. Graduates are considered successful following graduation if they are employed full-time, employed in fields closely or moderately related to their academic programs, are satisfied or very satisfied with their jobs, or have begun another academic program. Data for this survey is made available in the [Alumni Survey Data Explorer](#), part of UVU's performance measures dashboard.

The survey is typically conducted in the summer one year after nominal graduation (e.g., Fall 2017, Spring 2018, and Summer 2018 graduates were surveyed in summer of 2019). Efforts are made to contact all graduates and the survey typically receives responses from between 1,300 and 1,700 graduates for a nominal margin of error between  $\pm 2.4\%$  and  $\pm 2.7\%$  overall. Evaluation of respondents indicate that there are no noticeable response biases. The overall number of responses permits reliable analysis of a limited number of subgroups, including by key student demographic groups required by NWCCU Standard 1.D.2 and, by including several years of graduates in one analysis, graduates of individual schools and colleges.

Utah is in the process of developing state-wide data on post-graduation employment based on unemployment insurance data collected by the state Department of Workforce Services (DWS). Once implemented, this will allow UVU to identify graduates' employment status, sector, and income more reliably than through surveys. UVU will move to using DWS data as its primary post-graduation employment data source when these data become available. However, even after these new data become available, UVU will need to continue collecting survey data to address gaps in the DWS data including self-employment and out-of-state employment.

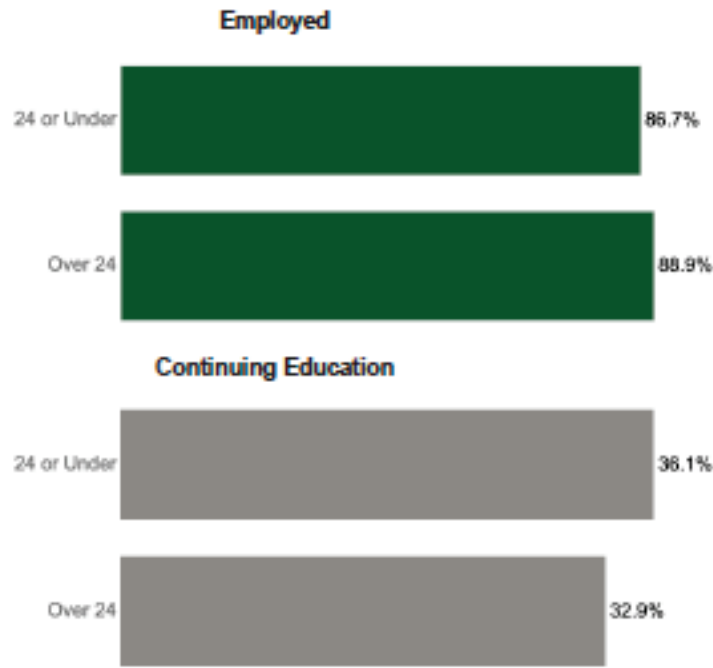


Figure 2.6: UVU post-graduation student success

UVU does not compare post-graduation success data to peer institutions, as no reliable source with appropriate peer data appears to be available.

**2.2 Peer Institutions**

By resolution of the UVU Board of Trustees on October 24, 2019, Utah Valley University has adopted the following six regional universities and four emerging dual-mission colleges as comparison institutions:

**Regional Universities (NWCCU Benchmarks)**

- Weber State University
- Dixie State University
- University of Alaska-Anchorage
- Arkansas Tech University
- Western Kentucky University
- CUNY College of Staten Island

**Emerging Dual-Mission Colleges (Internal)**

- Palm Beach State College
- St Petersburg College
- South Texas College
- Bellevue College

The university uses the regional universities as its list of comparison institutions adopted for compliance with the peer comparison requirements of NWCCU Standard 1D. UVU uses the full list to establish internal goals and to assess its mission fulfillment and other key plans such as its completion and inclusion plans. UVU also utilizes its full list of comparable institutions for IPEDS comparison.

Identification of peer institutions for UVU is exceptionally challenging. In the 2018-19 academic year, according to IPEDS data, UVU was the nation’s only public, non-doctoral, physical campus institution enrolling more than 30,000 students and awarding degrees at the associate, bachelor, and master level. The comparison institutions list was thus developed in an especially rigorous process led by the university’s Peer Institutions Working Group. Over the Spring 2019 semester, the group selected

institutions based on IPEDS data in a three-stage evaluation based on (1) criteria mandated by Utah State Board of Regents Policy R508, “Guidelines for Approving Lists of Comparable Institutions”; (2) similarity to UVU using nearest neighbor analysis; and (3) subjective evaluation of top candidates to balance a range of competing considerations. The working group identified 10 institutions that provide a suitable range of comparisons for UVU (in particular, geographic balance), nine of which were among the top 20 institutions ranked in the nearest neighbor analysis.

This methodology and the resulting list of institutions were reviewed and supported by the Utah Commissioner of Higher Education and key staff members in May 2020. A system-wide policy review on comparison institutions is planned following completion of the Utah higher education system restructuring. UVU anticipates reviewing its comparison institutions list following the policy review and implementing any changes well in advance of the 2024 Evaluation of Institutional Effectiveness.

No national data source for peer institution equity gap data appears to be available.

### **2.3 Evaluation of Student Achievement Data**

Student achievement and equity data is evaluated as part of the UVU mission fulfillment self-evaluation process, which is described in detail in Section 1 of this report. The University Planning Advisory Committee (UPAC) evaluates fulfillment of UVU’s mission, action commitments, and objectives biannually. Student achievement and closing equity gaps are addressed in objectives under the Include and Achieve action commitments. The committee makes recommendations to the university leadership and the Board of Trustees for additional determinations and action as appropriate. This periodic review ensures that UVU regularly evaluates and continuously improves its institutional performance as required under NWCCU Standards 1.B.1–4 and reflects on the student achievement and equity data required under Standards 1.D.1–4. The university’s *2020 Mission Fulfillment Analysis Baseline Report* was approved by UVU’s President’s Council on April 23, 2020, and by its Board of Trustees on June 25, 2020. It is included as an appendix to this report.

UPAC will conduct three mission fulfillment evaluations during the 2018–2024 accreditation cycle. The purpose of the 2019–2020 evaluation is threefold: (1) to test the value of each indicator and of the evaluation rubric as the basis for evaluation, revising as needed to make future evaluations more effective; (2) to provide a baseline against which progress can be judged; and (3) to identify priority areas for university action through 2024. UPAC will conduct a second evaluation in the 2021–22 academic year evaluating progress, and a final evaluation in the 2023–24 academic year that will form the basis for much of UVU’s *2024 Evaluation of Institutional Effectiveness Report* to NWCCU.

### **2.4 Equity Gaps**

UVU’s integrated dual-mission model and open undergraduate admission policy addresses the single most important equity gap by providing access to students who would not be admitted to selective institutions. As stated in UVU’s Vision 2030, UVU provides accessible and equitable educational opportunities for every student who wants to receive a rewarding postsecondary education. UVU’s non-prejudicial approach to education enables all students to come as they are, finding access not only to admission but to success. Providing access to an affordable, high-quality university education on the basis of equity rather than past achievement (and the social advantages that typically support it) necessarily increases the challenges in supporting student achievement and impacts comparison of retention and graduation rates.

As a state leader in inclusion initiatives, UVU continues to invest in strategic outreach to and support for students from underrepresented backgrounds. In 2014, UVU implemented a four-year strategic inclusion plan. By 2018, UVU had completed 34 of the 36 action steps outlined in this plan. Earlier this year, UVU launched its *Inclusion Plan 2020–2024*, which contains nearly 70 action steps to continue to focus on targeted support for historically underserved and underrepresented students and communities. This plan

emphasizes action commitments to strengthen systemic efforts, such as inclusive hiring, campus climate, and accountability measures to impact retention and student success. The current inclusion plan is included as an appendix to this report.

UVU uses the following definitions in examining the equity gaps in student achievement as stated in NWCCU Standard 1.D.2.

### Race and Ethnicity

UVU operationalizes race and ethnicity in three categories: Hispanic/Latino, White (Single Race) Non-Hispanic/Latino, and all other minorities combined. The racial and ethnic identification of Fall 2019 students is shown in Table 2.1. With 18.6% of its student body identifying as people of color, UVU's student body is slightly more diverse than its service region. Analysis of the nearly 5,000 ethnically Hispanic/Latino students is reliable and a routine part of most UVU data analysis. UVU's relatively small populations of non-Hispanic/Latino racial minorities makes analysis of specific racial groups more problematic. Nominal margins of error for within-group statistics exceed  $\pm 5$  percentage points for monoracial American Indian and Native Alaskan, Native Hawaiian and Pacific Islander, and Black students, and approach that for Asian students. By combining non-White, non-Hispanic racial groups, UVU can make more reliable analyses of equity gaps among racial minority students.

Group	Number of Students	Percent of Enrollment	Nominal Margin of Error
<b>Hispanic/Latino</b>	4,966	11.8%	1.39%
American Indian/Native Alaskan	177	0.4%	7.37%
Native Hawaiian/Pacific Islander	280	0.7%	5.86%
Black	346	0.8%	5.27%
Asian	566	1.3%	4.12%
Two or More	1,476	3.5%	2.55%
<b>Total Non-Hispanic Minorities</b>	2,845	6.8%	1.84%
<b>White</b>	33,252	79.1%	0.54%
<b>Unknown</b>	381	0.9%	5.02%
<b>Non-Resident Alien</b>	586	1.4%	4.05%

**Table 2.1: Racial and ethnic identification of Fall 2019 students**

For over a decade, UVU has prioritized Hispanic/Latino students, the largest minority group in its service region and on its campus, through its Latino initiative. The UVU Latino Initiative engages students, parents, K-12 educators, and community leaders in dialogues, programs, resources, and services to advance the educational attainment of its Latino student population. Since its inception, the Latino Initiative has increased UVU's Latino student enrollment by 361% and Latino graduation headcount by 372%. UVU has the largest Latina/o student enrollment (4,966 Latino students) among four-year universities in Utah. Most of these students are low-income, and about 80% of these students will be the first in their families to graduate from college.

UVU has seen tremendous growth (180%) in the number and percentage of students of color from 2008 (2,620 students, 8.6%) to 2018 (7,359 students, 18.4%). With the launch of various multicultural initiatives (Latino, Native American, Pacific Islander, African Diaspora), UVU works to increase enrollment, retention, and completion for students of color. Based on historical rates, the demographics of UVU's service region, and state goals for higher education accessibility, UVU has set a goal for racial and ethnic minority representation among students of 21.5% by 2025.

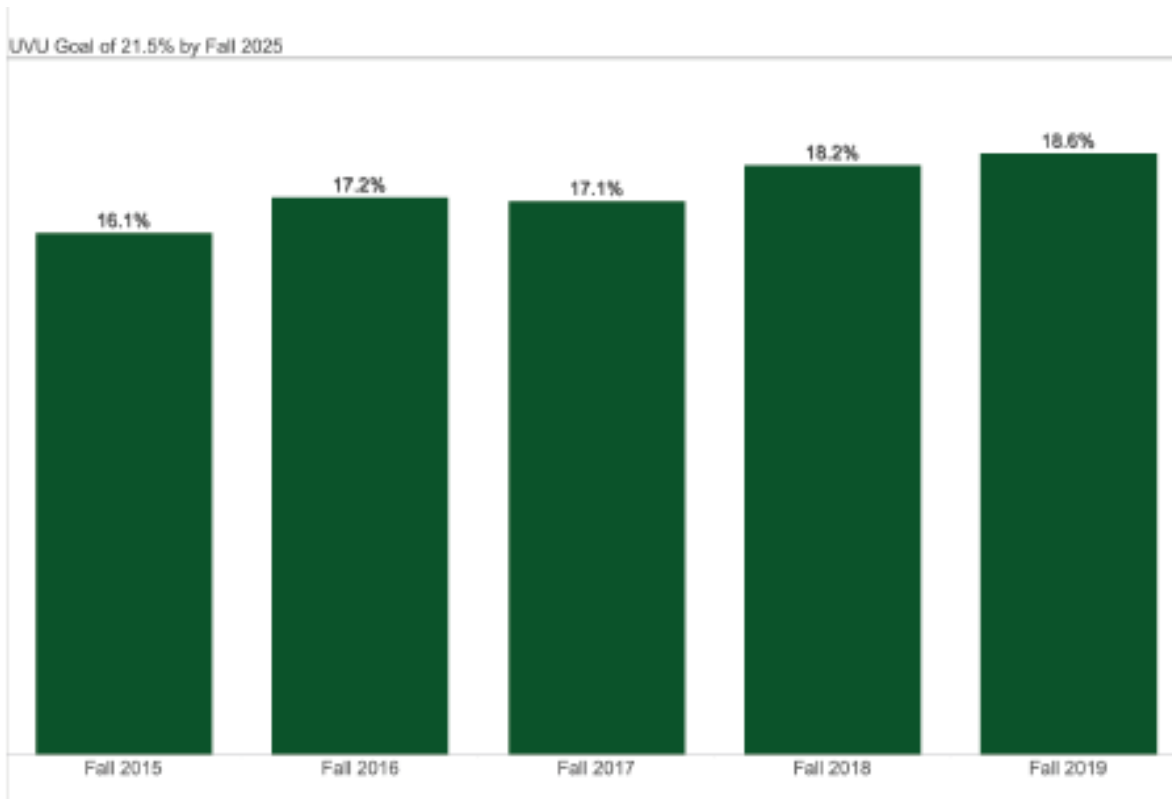


Figure 2.7: Racial and ethnic minority representation among UVU students

Gender

Consistent with IPEDS and Utah Board of Higher Education data standards, UVU operationalizes gender as a male/female binary. Students must identify as “male” or “female”; other options for gender identity are not available. The university does not routinely collect data on transgender or non-binary students, though it does occasionally ask such questions on surveys. Unlike state and national norms, UVU has a slight male majority (51.8%) in its student body and in degrees awarded (53.4%). The gap between male and female enrollments has narrowed through specific initiatives to recruit, support, retain, and graduate more women. These efforts are led by UVU’s Women’s Success Center.

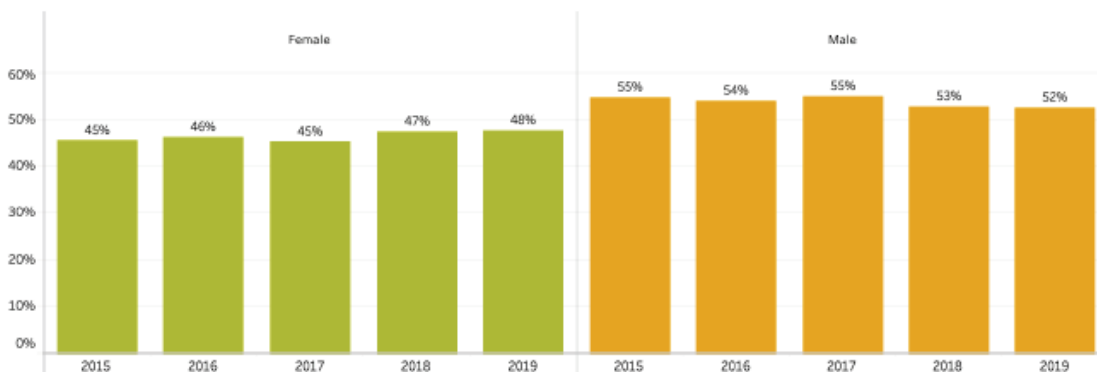


Figure 2.8: Gender representation among UVU students

### Age

Nearly one in every four UVU students (excluding high school concurrent enrollment students) is 25 or older. Providing opportunity and support for adult learners is a critical component of UVU’s responsibility for meeting the region’s educational needs. While the concept of “adult learner” encompasses much more than age, especially in a region where many college students do not wait for graduation to start families, UVU operationalizes adult learners as students age 25 and older for the purpose of student achievement measures. During Summer 2020, a task force has worked to create an adult learner plan, one element of which identifies adult learners as an institutionally meaningful equity category under Standard 1.D.2.

In addition to providing educational opportunities for adult learners, UVU offers a robust program of concurrent enrollment for qualified high school students. Complete College America, a national advocate for increasing college completion rates and closing the equity gap, has identified the completion of college-level English and mathematics in the first year of a college student’s enrollment as a retention and completion strategy. UVU can increase completion significantly by supporting high school juniors and seniors in designing course schedules that facilitate their completion of English 1010 and the required quantitative literacy class for their chosen pathway. With this goal in mind, UVU is working to offer English 1010 and quantitative literacy concurrent enrollment courses in every high school in its service region.

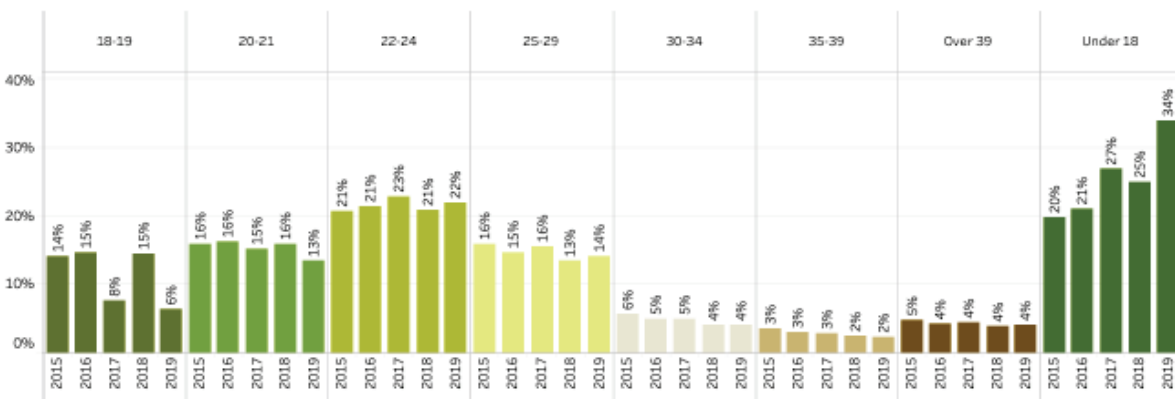


Figure 2.9: Age representation of UVU students

### Socioeconomic Status

Pell Grant eligibility is the de facto national standard for socioeconomic status in higher education, and UVU is not unique in using it to operationalize SES measures. Nonetheless, UVU recognizes unique constraints in its use of Pell eligibility. For the 2016-17 financial aid cycle, Utah had the lowest rate of FAFSA completion in the country. In 2018-19 financial aid cycle, 13,597 UVU students received Pell grants. Through concerted efforts, Utah experienced a 39% increase in the number of high school students completing a FAFSA. Overall, it is likely that Pell eligibility underestimates the number of low income or low SES students at UVU.

In addition to Pell eligibility and Pell awards, one measure in Utah’s performance-based funding formula for higher education is the total number of annual graduates who were Pell eligible at entry into the USHE system. In the 2012-13 academic year, UVU had 403 students who met these criteria; that number has increased 247% to 1,399 in the 2018-19 academic year.



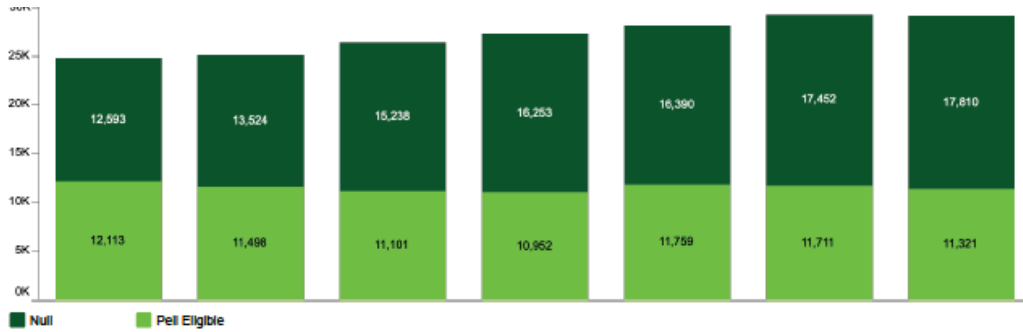


Figure 2.10: Pell eligibility of UVU students

### First-Generation Students

First-generation students are a central part of UVU’s mission. UVU’s “I Am First” initiative is designed to welcome first-generation students, improve experiences, and advance outcomes of first-generation college students. The university has also created a new First-Generation Student Success Center. UVU defines students as first-generation if neither parent has completed a bachelor’s degree when the student applies for admission.

UVU recognizes significant challenges in identifying first-generation students. The university relies on self-reported data collected on admission applications to identify first-generation students. Low FAFSA submission rates prevent UVU from relying on the most common source of data, and self-reported data at admission has proved less robust than one might hope, especially as first-generation students often have more difficulty identifying themselves as such than students whose parents have bachelor’s degrees.

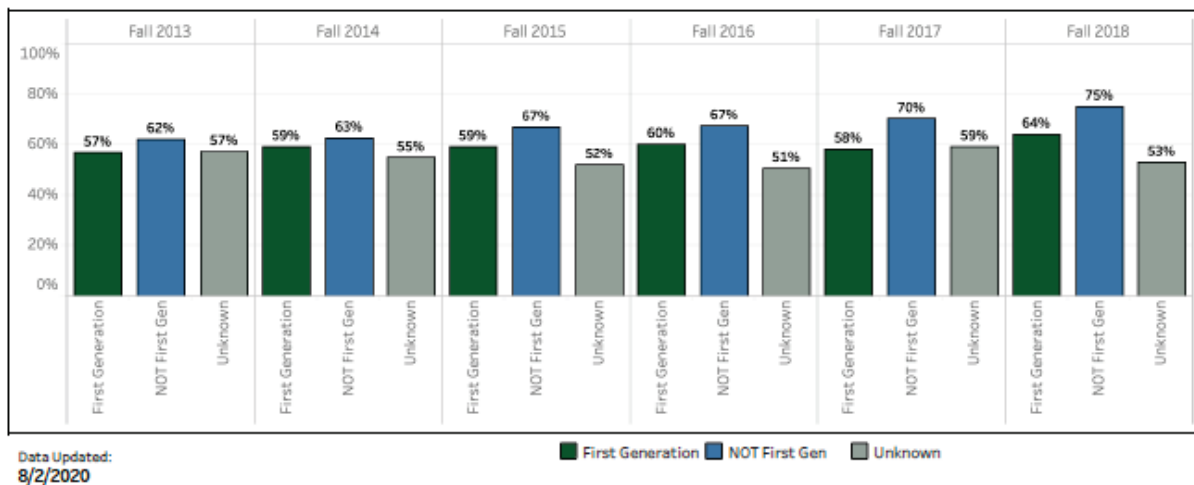


Figure 2.11: Retention rate of first-generation students

### Institutionally Meaningful Categories

UVU’s priority equity gaps are defined by its major initiatives. All relevant student groups are included within those explicitly identified in Standard 1.D.2 and require no additional data. As implementation of *Vision 2030* continues, the university will consider whether target populations can be defined for other aspects of the university’s mission.

### 3 PROGRAMMATIC ASSESSMENT

UVU’s program assessment process is designed to ensure student success and promote continuous improvement while respecting the unique intellectual and professional positions of each discipline and the aims of the university’s Essential Learning Outcomes (ELOs). The general process is illustrated in Figure 3.1. Consistent with NWCCU Standards 1.C.3 and 1.C.6, all programs identify and publish expected program learning outcomes (PLOs), and the university has identified ELOs for use in general education assessment. Achievement of these outcomes is assessed by the General Education Committee in the case of ELOs, by internal program or department-level review processes in programs that do not have programmatic accreditation, or in accordance with programmatic accreditor standards for programs that hold programmatic accreditation. Assessment reports for programs are reviewed by school or college assessment committees for oversight and to identify areas for continuous improvement at the school or college level. The University Academic Programs Assessment Committee reviews all reports to identify areas for institution-wide improvement and to evaluate overall achievement of learning outcomes as part of the mission fulfillment evaluation process described in Section 1.

Program Learning Outcomes (Individual Academic Programs)		Essential Learning Outcomes (General Education and All Academic Programs)	
	Institutional Track	Accreditation Track	
Institutional Review	University Planning Advisory Committee Mission Fulfillment Evaluation		Institutional Review
	Academic Program Assessment Committee Review		
		Academic Affairs Committee Accreditation Review	
School/ College Review	School or College Assessment Committee Review		General Education Committee Review
Program/ Department Review	Institutional Program Assessment Process	Programmatic Accreditor Program Assessment Process	
	Establish PLOs applicable to majors		Establish ELOs applicable to all students

Figure 3.1: UVU learning outcomes assessment processes

#### 3.1 General Education Assessment

UVU’s general education program aims to achieve six core competencies, referred to at UVU as Essential Learning Outcomes. ELOs are a comprehensive set of learning goals that are fostered and developed across a student’s entire educational experience. They reflect the knowledge, skills, and competencies needed to meet the challenges of an ever-changing and complex world. ELOs prepare students for future employment, life, and citizenship. With the achievement of these outcomes, UVU graduates will possess breadth and depth of knowledge, highly developed intellectual and practical skills, commitment to personal and social responsibility, awareness of the interdependence of communities, and the ability to synthesize and apply their learning to solve complex real-world problems.

UVU’s six ELOs are

- **Integrative and Applied Learning:** A student will engage in discipline-appropriate experiences with the academic and broader community through integrated and applied learning.
- **Intellectual and Practical Skills Foundation:** A student will acquire a foundation of intellectual and practical skills including communication, quantitative reasoning, qualitative reasoning (critical, analytical, and creative thinking), and technical and information literacies.
- **People of Integrity:** A student will become personally and socially responsible by acquiring, developing and demonstrating skills in ethical reasoning and understanding.
- **Professional Competency:** A student will demonstrate professional competence by meeting the established standards of the discipline, working as a valued member of a team, effectively formulating and solving problems, and actively seeking and honing lifelong learning skills.
- **Stewards of Place:** A student will demonstrate stewardship of local, national, and global communities by cultivating awareness of: interdependence among those communities; issues within those communities; and organizations and skills that address such issues.
- **Knowledge Foundation:** A student will demonstrate knowledge of human cultures and the physical and natural world in the following areas of essential study: arts, history, humanities, languages, science and mathematics, social sciences. Knowledge Foundation refers to general education distribution courses and other courses and experiences within the major.

UVU's ELOs were adopted in 2008, with all general education courses certified as meeting at least one ELO since 2010. In 2012, the ELOs were adopted as university-wide outcomes, with PLOs linked to ELOs where appropriate.

Review of the general education courses in which ELOs are primarily taught is administered by the General Education Committee (GEC). The GEC consists of faculty representatives from each college or school at the university. The current general education (GE) course review process began in 2015. The year before that, the GEC developed a set of criteria for each category of general education course. This was done in collaboration with deans, chairs, and faculty from all of the colleges and schools that teach general education courses. Along with this set of criteria, it was determined that general education courses should be broad introductory courses that are open for students of any major and with content that is consistently taught across all sections regardless of modality.

The current assessment process consists of selecting a set of general education courses for review each year. The offering department prepares a review packet for the GEC. This packet includes the completion of a form about the course and syllabi for each section (if different). The GEC oversees the administration of a student survey to assess if the general education criteria for the appropriate general education category, including instruction in the appropriate ELOs, are met and these results are added to each packet. Courses that do not meet all of the criteria are put on probation. The GEC provides the offering department with a report detailing the reasons for the probation and suggested actions to lift the probation. If the course does not meet these conditions within a year, it is removed from the approved list of general education courses. The GEC may grant extensions to this deadline under extenuating circumstances.

The course probation process has proven effective in ensuring that general education courses meet general education criteria, including addressing appropriate ELOs. For example, FIN 1060 (Personal Finance) meets the social science requirement. During their review, the GEC determined that sections delivered on campus met the criteria for a social science general education course, but sections taught in high schools through UVU's concurrent enrollment program had strayed significantly from the course curriculum taught on campus. This lack of consistency led the GEC to put the course on probation. After meeting

with the chair of the GEC, the Finance and Economics Department assigned a faculty member to oversee the concurrent enrollment instruction. This faculty member began hosting an annual meeting on campus for the high school teachers in which their individual syllabi were reviewed, revised if necessary, and approved. Those that could not attend were visited personally by this faculty member. The faculty member also instituted a standard final exam that all high school sections were required to use. This significantly improved consistency between high school concurrent enrollment and on-campus sections and ensured that the course achieved ELOs as expected wherever and however offered.

The GEC's recent review of ART 1050 (Photography I) serves as an example of how the review process leads to improved achievement of ELOs. The GEC review found through the student survey that the students were not learning about key concepts of fine arts, as required. The course was put on probation, and the chair of the GEC learned from the chair of the Art Department that some adjunct faculty who were professional photographers were overly focused on the details of using photographic equipment and software and on career paths rather than aesthetic concepts. The chair of the Art Department assigned a full-time faculty member to oversee the course and improvements were implemented the following semester.

In addition to the probation process, the GEC can remove courses from the general education list. In every such case, the appropriate department chair agreed that the course did not and could not meet the general education requirements. This review process ensures that general education courses consistently meet general education criteria including achieving the university's ELOs.

As part of the university's Re-envisioning the Undergraduate Educational Experience initiative, UVU is currently reviewing its ELOs and the assessment procedures for them. The aim of the revision process is to simplify the list of ELOs and to improve evaluation efforts, focusing on directly measuring student learning rather than procedural compliance. While still in development, the working concept for assessment will couple direct assessment of student artifacts in general education courses with aggregated assessment results for those PLOs that map to ELOs. The new ELOs and assessment practices will be in place by the end of the 2020-21 academic year. This process is discussed in detail in Section 4.

### **3.2 Academic Program Assessment Process**

Assessment of academic programs is based on the achievement of program learning outcomes identified for each program that will be met by program graduates. PLOs are operationally defined as the knowledge, skills, and competencies that students should be able to attain by the time they complete their course of study. Respecting disciplinary differences, specific PLOs can vary widely. PLOs may address general intellectual skills important for the discipline, disciplinary-specific knowledge, and workplace readiness skills appropriate for the professions associated with the discipline. In some cases, PLOs are specified by programmatic accreditors. Programs may specify PLOs for emphases within their program or for different degree levels, or they may focus on PLOs common to the discipline with expectations for achievement varying by degree level (e.g., mastery at different levels of Bloom's cognitive domain taxonomy) as appropriate. As required by NWCCU Standard 1.C.3, all programs publish their PLOs on their department or program websites.

Programs may also identify outcomes related to student achievement other than learning, such as completion, employment, or extracurricular engagement. These outcomes are assessed through the unit strategic planning process unless otherwise required by programmatic accreditors.

PLOs are assessed to determine the degree to which students have attained the particular knowledge, skills, and competencies specific to the program. Assessment of PLOs proceeds along one of two tracks appropriate to the program.

### Programmatic Accreditation

Consistent with its mission and its workforce readiness role within the Utah System of Higher Education, UVU encourages programs, departments, and schools and colleges to seek programmatic accreditation where appropriate. Where programmatic accreditation includes standards or processes for the assessment of student learning, UVU considers that an effective and credible programmatic assessment process and does not require programs to complete the internal institutional assessment process as well.

As the number of programs accredited by programmatic accreditors grows, UVU is seeing a need for more institutional support and oversight of programmatic accreditation and is implementing a regular pre- and post-accreditation review process led by the Academic Affairs Committee. This process is described in Section 4.

### Internal Program Assessment

The majority of programs are not programmatically accredited and use the institutional track for assessment of program learning outcomes. This track is supported by Academic Quality Assurance; Institutional Effectiveness, Planning, and Accreditation Support; and the Academic Program Assessment Committee of the Faculty Senate. In this track, programs follow a basic assessment structure developed institutionally. A faculty assessment coordinator within each academic program manages this process.

Programs identify specific metrics to determine achievement of each PLO. Metrics are composed of a definition of performance operationalized in an assessment instrument and a standard of performance. At a minimum, programs must identify one direct, summative assessment instrument for each PLO, preferably a student artifact; many programs identify additional assessments for either formative purposes or as part of a triangulation methodology. Programs are given maximum reasonable flexibility in the selection of assessment instruments in order to respect the unique character of each discipline. Assessment instruments can be qualitative or quantitative, direct or indirect, and may include essays, interviews, oral presentations, tests, portfolios, journals, research papers, and practicum experiences as appropriate to the discipline.

Program faculty members collect and review assessment data annually, though programs are not required to evaluate all instruments annually. Many programs use a multi-year scheduled rotation of instruments. Programs evaluate performance in comparison to the standard of performance established with the assessment instrument. In evaluating achievement of PLOs, programs are encouraged to provide appropriate contextual information to enhance understanding and interpretation of the results.

Programs document assessment data, findings, and actions in an annual program assessment report. Academic Quality Assurance (AQA) and Institutional Effectiveness, Planning, and Accreditation Support (IEPA) provide assessment guidelines to departments; alternative formats and processes may be used where appropriate to the discipline or organization provided that the minimum standards for assessment are met. A common summary template summarizes program assessment findings and improvement actions for all programs, including those assessed through programmatic accreditation. The assessment guidelines and summary template are included as appendices to this report.

### Institutional Review and Continuous Improvement

UVU's academic assessment processes are oriented first and foremost to promoting continuous improvement. General education assessment and academic program assessment findings are used by the school or college assessment committee reviews, in unit strategic planning, and the university-wide Planning, Budget, and Assessment (PBA) process.

Units may act directly on assessment findings through their annually updated department strategic plans and, where resources are needed, the university PBA process. UVU uses a four-year rolling strategic planning process for all academic and administrative units. A full description of the unit planning process

is available on the [IEPA website](#); UVU's PBA process is outlined in full on the [PBA website](#). Academic departments generally include one or more objectives in their strategic plans related to the achievement of PLOs. The department's learning outcomes assessment reports serve as the assessment component of this objective. Departments that identify weaknesses or opportunities in achievement of their PLOs establish a Quality Improvement Initiative within the strategic plan to address the issues. Strategic plans serve as the basis for resource requests in the PBA process, ensuring that resources are allocated based on demonstrated need to promote continuous improvement.

Each school or college maintains an assessment committee chaired by a faculty member who serves as the school or college assessment coordinator. The committees generally include each department or program's assessment coordinator and an associate dean. These assessment committees play two roles. One role is to oversee the learning outcome assessment process. Each program submits their assessment reports and a summary form to the school or college assessment committee, which evaluates and makes recommendations for improvement in the program's assessment process. The committee also identifies consistent issues across programs within the school or college that can be best addressed by action at that level. For example, the Woodbury School of Business previously identified writing deficiencies as a common problem across programs and implemented an enhanced business writing course required of all business majors regardless of program. Several years after implementation, the school continues to see significant improvement in writing skills for business majors.

The committees annually report actions on these roles in a school or college assessment report for review by the dean of the school or college. These reports are also forwarded to the recently formed Academic Program Assessment Committee (APAC) of the Faculty Senate for university-wide review. APAC is in the process of developing a formal review and reporting process, which will be used as a mission fulfillment indicator under UVU's Achieve action commitment. This process is discussed in more detail in Section 4.

### 3.3 Program Assessment Case Studies

UVU's model for assessment of program learning outcomes is illustrated by two programs. The assessment practices of the common program learning outcomes for baccalaureate programs in the Department of Dance are representative of the PLO assessment practices that UVU intends for all programs. Programs within the College of Health and Public Service represent effective integration of program-level assessment with college-level review. Taken together, these two programs represent UVU's vision of effective academic assessment and continuous improvement in the assessment process. UVU expects all schools or colleges and academic programs to have similar assessment processes, school or college review processes, and continuous improvement by the 2024 Evaluation of Institutional Effectiveness. UVU will use the school or college review process as the primary means of achieving this goal.

#### Department of Dance Baccalaureate Programs

The program assessment process in the Department of Dance, part of the School of the Arts, represents UVU's internal model for assessing PLOs. The department administers three baccalaureate programs: Bachelor of Fine Arts in Dance (with emphases in ballet and modern/contemporary dance), Bachelor of Science in Dance Education, and Bachelor of Science in Ballroom Dance. PLOs for each program are made available to current and potential students through the [department website](#). The core of the dance baccalaureate programs are common PLOs in performance technique and writing. The language of the Dance Education program and the Modern Dance emphasis is representative, with other programs varying semantically but not substantively to reflect the specific artistic forms of the programs:

- Perform dance with artistry demonstrating advanced level technical competency.
- Write articulately using dance language demonstrating perceptive, reflective, and analytical knowledge and skills.



Assessment of these outcomes is managed in a common departmental framework that allows for appropriate variation according to program and emphasis. These PLOs are mapped to the university ELOs and to the curriculum, with each course either introducing, developing, or assessing one or more PLOs.

Performance is evaluated in upper-division performance courses taken during the last year students are members of a performing company before graduation. Students in most dance programs are evaluated according to faculty-developed rubrics for each discipline; students in Ballroom Dance are evaluated based on Medals Exams, standardized proficiency exams conducted across the United States in studios and schools by external certified examiners. The department considers itself successful if 80% of students score at least 80% on the program assessment rubric or Medals Exams for technical skill.

Results of the assessments are summarized in Table 3.1.

Program	Evaluation Course	Proficient Score	% of Students Proficient
<b>BS, Dance Education</b>	DANC 342R: Modern/Contemporary Technique Level 3	3/4	87.5% (7/8)
<b>BFA, Modern/ Contemporary Dance emphasis</b>	DANC 442R: Modern/Contemporary Technique Level 4	3.5/5	100% (4/4)
<b>BFA, Ballet emphasis</b>	DANC 427R: Ballet Technique IV	3.5/5	100% (8/8)
<b>BS, Ballroom Dance</b>	Most recent medals exam course	90/100	100% (10/10)

**Table 3.1: Department of Dance performance technique assessment results**

The department's success in the 2019-20 academic year reflects significant effort toward program improvement from the previous academic year. Each program addressed changes in course curricula to improve performance technique based on findings from previous assessments. Significant improvements included the following:

- Increasing emphasis on phrasing and rhythmic clarity; spatial awareness; transitions; and lower body resiliency in weight shift with yielding and pushing, reaching and pulling in planning, instruction, and formative and summative assessment in Levels 1–4 of Modern/Contemporary Dance Technique courses, supported by increased collaboration and communication among faculty teaching the technique sequence.
- Incorporating a dance-specific conditioning regimen one day a week into DANC 143 (Modern/Contemporary Dance Technique Level 1) to aid in strength and understanding of yielding/pushing through the lower body, and emphasizing the connections between upper/lower connectivity and the content taught in DANC 265R (Fundamentals of Movement) and DANC 365R (Advanced Fundamentals of Movement).
- Increasing emphasis on whole body awareness in upper division ballet classes to promote positive improvement in the level of achievement in performance technique.
- Concentrating efforts in the level 3 and 4 Ballroom Dance technique classes on improving breath support and body connectivity.
- Improving integration of adjunct faculty members into program improvement efforts and cultural expectations of dance programs across the department.

Together, these changes have significantly improved student achievement of the performance technique program learning outcome.

Writing is evaluated using two signature assignments: a paper in the Current Issues in Dance course or a Choreographer Statement in the Senior Capstone II course. Evaluation is based on a faculty-developed rubric for dance-specific writing. Writing assignments are evaluated by faculty members not teaching



these courses. The program considers itself successful if 80% of graduating students achieve a score of 3.5 or better out of 5.

The last two years' evaluations illustrate a paradigmatic process of evaluation and continuous improvement. In the 2018-19 academic year, the average score on Current Issues papers was 3.1 on a 4-point scale (equivalent to 3.875 out of 5), and 7 out of 12 students received a 3 or higher. The average score on choreographer statements was 3.7 on a 5-point rubric, and 10 of 19 students received a 4 or higher. The department concluded that these results were only marginally satisfactory.

As a result, the department implemented a series of changes in its writing expectations, curriculum, and pedagogy. The ballroom dance emphasis noted positive results in the 2018-19 academic year by implementing these curricular changes; other programs followed suit the following year. All Orientation to Dance classes implemented the use of Outlines, Laban Movement Analysis Observation, and the Writing Lab for all written assignments. The faculty then enhanced writing requirements in the curriculum to encourage and support student engagement with writing. The 5-point rubric was also instituted across all programs for continuity.

In the 2019-20 academic year, scores improved notably. The average score on the Current Issues paper was 4.1 on a 5-point scale; 14 out of 16 students received a 3.9 or higher. Thirteen of 19 students received a score of 4 or higher on Choreographer Statements. The largest weaknesses remained in punctuation, grammar, and syntax, as well as a lack of a clear thesis statement. Faculty noted an improvement in overall organization and expression.

While these scores do not fully meet department expectations, they do represent noteworthy improvement in only one year. Faculty members determined that the Senior Capstone class implementation of student feedback in developing the student prospectus and offering written examples and studying memoir form in the Current Issues class were effective in improving the quality of written work. Continuing these efforts so that students are consistently exposed to high-quality writing instruction over the course of their academic careers at UVU is expected to make a significant improvement in achievement of the writing program learning outcome annually.

The Department of Dance curriculum map, performance rubrics, and annual assessment reports are included as an appendix to this report.

### Master of Public Service

The program assessment process in the Master of Public Service (MPS) program, part of the College of Health and Public Service (CHPS), represents UVU's model for the integration of program assessment and institutional planning through school or college-level assessment committees. This is especially important in supporting the creation of new programs. The program has made significant improvements in its assessment processes in response to review by the CHPS assessment committee, resulting in greater understanding of student achievement in the program.

The MPS program is an applied inter-disciplinary professional master's degree aimed at preparing public service administrators in emergency services and criminal justice. This graduate degree provides an in-depth education of the science and praxis of administering vital public services, public safety functions, ethical considerations, leadership, and strategic communications, along with issues in emergency management, civil security/resiliency, public works, transportation, critical infrastructure protection, post-disaster humanitarian response, pandemics, strategic planning, public health, and public policy issues.

The MPS program began assessments of student learning in the 2018-19 academic year after admitting its first students in Fall 2017 and appointing an initial assessment coordinator in Fall 2018. In 2018-19, the MPS program assessed two PLOs:

- Students are able to create an original, workable, and current strategic/operational plan for a specific sector within the public services.
- Students are able to assess social issues within criminal justice policy.

PLOs were assessed using rubrics for signature assignments in MPS 690R (Public Services Project) and CJ 6230 (Criminal Justice Policy), respectively. Only the second PLO was met, with 100% of students meeting all assignment standards. Assessment of the first PLO was complicated by final paper options that excluded some students from the analysis. Even with this limited data, the program faculty were able to identify some actions for improving student learning, including implementation of a common final capstone project with a standardized grading rubric and assessment team in MPS 690R.

The MPS assessment report was submitted to the CHPS assessment committee for review and discussion. The need to improve the assessment process was acknowledged in the program's report. The college-level review is especially effective in CHPS, where health sciences programs holding programmatic accreditation provide effective models for programs that use the institutional review model. The CHPS assessment review process identified a significant source of the problems as confusion between course and program learning outcomes. As a result of feedback from the CHPS assessment review process, the MPS program significantly revised their PLOs for the 2019-20 academic year. The current PLOs for the MPS program are as follows:

- Demonstrate the ability to solve public service-related problems and to make effective decisions in a dynamic and constantly changing environment.
- Demonstrate the ability to prepare and execute budgets with an understanding of public finance principles and procedures for planning, mitigation, response, and recovery related to every-day delivery of public services, as well as public safety and disaster-related threats.
- Develop an understanding of risk management methods as they relate to public services.
- Develop an understanding of the legal, regulatory, human resource, and ethical issues surrounding service delivery administration, emergency response, safety, security, and resiliency for the community, state and/or nation.
- Demonstrate an understanding of the technical and leadership aspects of all levels of public services, including emergency management and the mitigation of, planning for, response to and recovery from exigent circumstances.

Due to disruptions related to the COVID-19 pandemic, assessments were adapted to support transitions in method of delivery. PLOs for the MPS program are assessed using signature assignments in MPS 6000 (Public Services Administration) and MPS 6020 (Public Service Policy and Evaluation). Assessment results are shown in Table 3.2.

PLO	Signature Assignment	Standard of Performance	Results
1	MPS 6000 research paper	Demonstrate the ability to identify a topic or issue related to public administration, solve public service-related problems, and to make effective decisions in a dynamic and constantly changing environment with a score of 85% or higher.	100% of Fall 2019 students met standard.
	MPS 6020 policy paper	Demonstrate the ability to identify a topic or issue related to public administration, solve public service-related problems, and to make effective decisions in a dynamic and constantly changing environment with a score of 85% or higher.	95% of Fall 2019 students met standard.
2	MPS 6000 budget discussion	Demonstrate an understanding of public finance principles related to every-day delivery of public services with a score of 100%.	100% of Fall 2019 students met standard.

3	MPS 6000 case study	Demonstrated an understanding of risk management as they relate to public services through phenomenological analysis appropriate to constructivist andragogy with a score of 90%.	96% of Fall 2019 students met standard.
4	MPS 6000 policy analysis	At least 80% of students should pass the project with a score of 85% or higher based on learning outcomes of the project.	96% of Fall 2019 students met standard.

**Table 3.2: Master of Public Service PLO assessment results**

The support of the CHPS assessment committee was essential to the MPS program's substantial improvement. A key goal for the committee was assisting new programs, including the MPS program, in improving learning outcomes assessment. The committee was particularly effective in supporting programs as they implemented the university's common PLO assessment report document. The committee determined that the standardized PLO assessment form made the presentation of goals, means, evidence, and plans for improvement more consistent throughout all programs. The committee set an assessment improvement goal for all CHPS programs in the next academic year to build and analyze the trend of data in order to identify the effectiveness of strategies implemented by each year. The committee is also supporting the MPS faculty in revising its research project to better assess and achieve PLOs.

The MPS and CHPS annual assessment reports are included as appendices to this report.

## 4 MOVING FORWARD

### 4.1 Mission Fulfillment: *Vision 2030*

UVU's mission fulfillment efforts are guided by its innovative *Vision 2030* strategic plan, adopted in 2019. The plan is a 10-year vision outlining how UVU's integrated dual mission will meet the higher education and workforce needs of Utah County, UVU's service region, and the state of Utah.

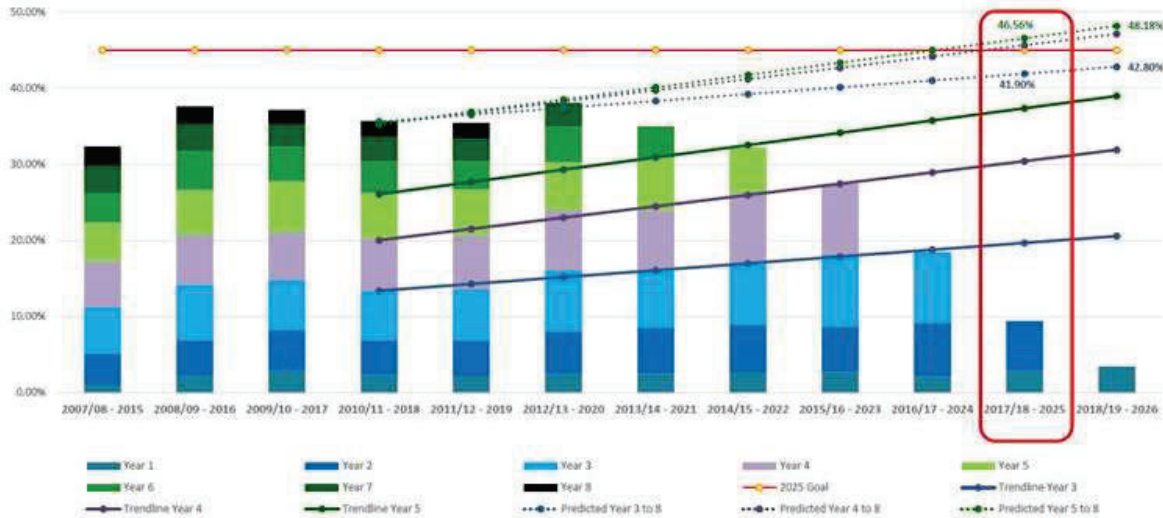
*Vision 2030* is built on a 60-year track record of success for Utah's integrated dual-mission universities, which combine the traditional roles of community college and teaching university in a single organizational and academic structure that provides accessible, affordable, and effective public higher education. Under *Vision 2030*, UVU is poised to meet the expanding needs of its service region by sustaining Utah's successful integrated dual-mission institution model. UVU has developed innovative solutions to address future growth and fulfill its designated role as an integrated dual-mission university within the Utah System of Higher Education. *Vision 2030* proposes three strategies supporting UVU's three action commitments that will enable the integrated dual-mission approach to meet Utah County's growing demand for higher education:

1. **ACHIEVE:** Enhance Student Success and Accelerate Completion of Meaningful Credentials.
2. **INCLUDE:** Improve Accessibility, Flexibility, and Affordability for All Current and Future UVU Students
3. **ENGAGE:** Strengthen Partnerships for Community, Workforce, and Economic Development

This plan identifies ten priority initiatives supporting these three strategies. These initiatives represent UVU's commitment to its mission as it ambitiously strives to serve the growing and diversifying student population and dynamic economy of its region. The initiatives will be implemented in three phases between 2019 and 2030. The *Vision 2030* strategic plan and its 2020 action plan are included as an appendix to this report.

### 4.2 Student Achievement

UVU's student achievement efforts are intended to promote continued progress toward a 45% completion goal by 2025. As shown in Figure 4.1, interim data for the classes of 2020 through 2025 indicate significant progress toward that goal. The 2020 Outcomes Measure completion rate at seven years was already the highest in UVU history, and the class of 2021 at six years had equaled the class of 2018 at eight years. UVU projects an eight-year completion rate of 46.5% by 2025, a 41% increase in a decade.



**Figure 4.1: Progress and predictions for UVU 8-year Outcome Measures as of August 1, 2019 (classes of 2015 to 2026)**

The centerpiece of these efforts is UVU’s *Completion Plan 2.0: Completion by Design*. This plan is a priority initiative of *Vision 2030*. A driving philosophy in this plan is the understanding that students generally perform better when guided deliberately through activities and courses designed for their individual needs. The plan also addresses the primary reasons UVU students leave, which are (1) finances, (2) student is underprepared for university level work, (3) family or life obligations, (4) university barriers including course scheduling conflicts and curriculum alignment, and (5) failure to make a personal connection to the university. The plan implements eight strategies to enhance student achievement:

- Student-centric course scheduling guidelines
- First-year advising center
- Stackable credentials and pathways
- General education
- Implementing Civitas for data-driven intervention
- Enhanced student communication
- Faculty development of advanced teaching skills
- Increasing student participation in high impact practices

UVU sees flexibility as an essential characteristic of a student-success driven institution. The university has found that students taking a mixed modality schedule (one including either a combination of online and face-to-face courses or at least one hybrid course) are more successful than those taking either a fully online or a fully face-to-face schedule (see Table 4.1. UVU’s *Vision 2030* goal is for 75% of full-time students to take mixed modality schedules. In Fall 2020, 65% of students were taking mixed modality schedules following technological improvements related to the COVID-19 pandemic.

	Face-to-Face Only	Online Only	Mixed Modality
<b>Number of students</b>	4,608	5,375	17,861
<b>Persistence Rate</b>	75%	76%	83%
<b>% Full-Time</b>	495	46%	79%

**Table 4.1: Student success by delivery modality, Fall 2020**

The University Flexible Learning Council (UFLC) was created by President Tuminez and Cabinet in December 2019 to innovate delivery of academic curriculum to anytime, anyplace, anyhow, and any pace.

The UFLC will support academic departments in non-traditional delivery methods including online, compressed, prior learning assessment, summer session, competency-based, and others. The UFLC partners with the Office of Teaching and Learning (OTL) to provide an array of central services to academic departments. OTL provides instructional design, faculty development, technical support, compliance support, and funding. Whereas the academic departments hold the responsibility for faculty hiring, evaluation of teaching, and course scheduling, the UFLC facilitates strategic planning of course development projects and quality reviews, sets scheduling targets, and streamlines communication.

The UFLC was essential in UVU's response to the COVID-19 pandemic. In Spring 2020, UVU spent approximately \$1.3 million provided by the CARES Act to upgrade classrooms, networks, and computers to support remote delivery of courses. All UVU classrooms now support live-streaming and recording of face-to-face sessions to allow the university to minimize health risks associated with COVID-19. In the process, UVU has been able to radically accelerate its efforts to move online as well as expand the modalities available. The majority of Fall 2020 courses will be offered in either a traditional online or live stream format. One-third of courses will be face-to-face on campus, most of which will be live streamed as well to provide maximum flexibility for students. Students and faculty are responding positively, with approximately three-fourths of seats filled in remote delivery sections compared to half in face-to-face sections.

In Spring 2020, the UFLC focused on establishing a process for prior learning assessment and launching UVU Online. Prior learning assessment (PLA) is a "proven, validated process through which faculty subject matter experts evaluate a student's previously learned competencies in a particular field and grant college credit when appropriate" (CAEL, 2019). The Utah legislature has mandated that all USHE institutions establish PLA processes by Fall 2020.

UVU recognizes that plans intended for the majority of students may not reflect the unique needs of all students and that factors driving retention may affect different students in different ways. *Completion Plan 2.0* is complemented by a range of student success initiatives for targeted student populations where equity gaps are a concern. Mature student success initiatives include the Hispanic/Latino Initiative, the Women's Success Center, the Native American Initiative, and the "I Am First" initiative for first-generation students. UVU is in the process of developing an adult learner plan and an African Diaspora Initiative. Together these programs aim to meet a benchmark for its Include Action Commitment of eliminating equity gaps between majority and underserved students.

With the NWCCU standards only nine months old and COVID-19 disrupting operations or shifting priorities in a number of areas, implementation of Standards 1.D.1–4 is only now being completed. UVU's institutional planning and mission fulfillment evaluation processes under the 2010 NWCCU standards addressed many of the areas that the commission made explicit requirements in its 2020 standards, which made much of the required data available even before implementation of the new standards. As a result, the university has been successful in addressing student achievement and closing equity gaps in the past and considers data currently available adequate to achieve substantial compliance with Standard 1.D.2. UVU will make further efforts in this area aimed at improving data visibility, usability, compliance in detail, and full integration of equity gap data into institutional planning processes as described in Standard 1.D.2. UVU will target the 2021-22 academic year's mission fulfillment evaluation as a deadline for full implementation.

### **4.3 Programmatic Assessment**

UVU's strategy for enhancing assessment of student learning is focused on greater coordination of what is, in the American public and private non-profit higher education system, an intentionally decentralized process. The university is creating coordinating and oversight bodies at the institutional and school or college level to better support assessment of student learning. At the institutional level, the Faculty Senate has created the Academic Program Assessment Committee (APAC). This committee is charged with



overseeing the assessment of Essential Learning Outcomes (ELOs) for the university and the assessment of Program learning outcomes (PLOs) for each academic program. It is composed of representatives of the eight schools and colleges (usually the chairs of the school or college assessment committees), key academic initiatives (the General Education Committee, the Global/Intercultural Committee, the Honors Program, and the Writing Enhanced course initiative), and assessment-focused administrative units (Academic Quality Assurance; Institutional Effectiveness, Planning, and Accreditation Support; Institutional Research, and the Associate Provost for Academic Programs). APAC is complemented by the creation of school or college assessment committees, which will provide oversight and peer review of program assessment reports.

While the case studies in Section 3 of this report represent UVU's models of effective assessment, many programs show some mechanical weaknesses in assessment practices. APAC and the school and college assessment committees will be the primary means of improving assessment processes, modeling assessment success, identifying weaknesses in program assessment processes, and providing technical assistance to programs. The College of Health and Public Service assessment committee described in Section 3 is the model for these committees' role in the assessment process. This process is expected to bring all programs to institutional standards for assessment of student learning by the 2024 Evaluation of Institutional Effectiveness.

As described in Section 3, many programs at UVU are assessed using the processes and standards of programmatic accreditors. To better coordinate and support these processes, UVU will implement guidelines for institutional support of programmatic accreditation. Under these guidelines programs remain responsible for compliance with programmatic accreditation requirements and processes. Institutional oversight and support processes will be administered by Academic Affairs through the Associate Provost for Academic Programs and supported by Academic Quality Assurance (AQA) and Institutional Effectiveness, Planning, and Accreditation Support (IEPA). All programs accredited by a programmatic accreditor or that intend to pursue programmatic accreditation will prepare annual reports for review by the Academic Affairs Council. The supporting organizations will also review accreditation reports to better facilitate compliance with programmatic accreditors' standards. The guidelines were approved by the Academic Affairs Committee on September 8, 2020 and are included as an appendix to this report.

Assessment efforts, collaboration with internal and external stakeholders, work to re-envision the undergraduate experience, and the implementation of NWCCU Standard 1.C.6 has led to an emerging consensus on the need for revising the university's ELOs. The aim of the ELO revision process is to streamline the ELOs, reducing the number and simplifying the language for external audiences, while at the same time improving UVU's ability to demonstrate achievement of them. While the process is in its early phases, the current working concept is to reduce the number of ELOs to between four and six, express them in plain language rather than academic or institutional jargon, and develop internal supporting concepts and documents that will guide assessment of the general education program and allow programs to map program learning outcomes to the simplified ELOs. This process is expected to be completed in Spring 2021. Following revision of the ELOs, programs will evaluate program and course learning outcomes to ensure consistency with the revised ELOs.



## 5 ADDENDUM: RESPONSE TO PRIOR RECOMMENDATIONS

### 5.1 NWCCU Section Guidelines

Addendums (Where Applicable) – Institutions which have been asked to address prior recommendations or which have been asked to address any transitional efforts to the 2020 Standards may be included in an Addendums section.

### 5.2 Recommendations 1 and 3 (Previously Satisfied)

The commission made four recommendations to UVU as part of its 2017 year seven evaluation. UVU was asked to address Recommendations 1 (metrics and benchmarks for core themes) and 3 (planning for existing and new programs) in its 2019 Mission and Core Themes Report. Based on that report, the commission acknowledged that UVU has met its expectations for improvement on these recommendations. While no further action on these recommendations is required, UVU continues to improve in these areas. As demonstrated in Section 1 of this report, the improved metrics and benchmarks have significantly enhanced UVU's ability to demonstrate mission fulfillment and identify areas for improvement. Planning for academic programs is a central feature of UVU's *Vision 2030* strategic plan.

### 5.3 Recommendation 2: Planning and Budget Participation

The evaluators recommend that UVU improve the transparency of the planning, budgeting, and assessment process below the executive level due to inconsistent communication across departments, schools, colleges, and administrative units (Standard 3.A.1 and Standard 3.A.2).

UVU is required to address this recommendation in the Mid-Cycle Report and is pleased to report its progress to the commission.

#### Expectations under 2010 and 2020 NWCCU Standards

UVU is firmly committed to collective participation in university governance, a hallmark of public higher education. Neither NWCCU 2010 Standard 3.A.1 nor Standard 3.A.2 requires transparency in the planning process nor addresses budgeting processes. These standards do require that comprehensive plans are "made available to appropriate constituencies" and that the comprehensive planning process is "broad-based and offers opportunities for input by appropriate constituencies."

Within the context of this recommendation, 2010 Standards 3.A.1 and 3.A.2 correspond to 2020 Standard 1.B.3:

The institution provides evidence that its planning process is inclusive and offers opportunities for comment by appropriate constituencies, allocates necessary resources, and leads to improvement of institutional effectiveness.

UVU understands 2020 Standard 1.B.3 as continuing the expectations established by the cited 2010 standards.

Based on the commission's evaluation reports during the 2010–2017 accreditation cycle, UVU understands the focus of concern in this recommendation to be the perceived lack of transparency and inconsistent communication in the Planning, Budget, and Assessment (PBA) process rather than substantive weaknesses in the process itself. The NWCCU's 2017 *Year Seven Peer Evaluation Report* registered a perception of opacity in budgeting among some faculty and staff, stating:

UVU employs a series of campus-wide meetings to inform the campus of the PBA process, but *for some reason there are those individuals on campus that believe the planning process and subsequent information could be improved.*<sup>1</sup>

This appears to be the factual basis for the commission's recommendation. However, the emphasized clause above provided limited specificity regarding the cause of the perceived lack of transparency, the scope and relevance of individuals' opinions to determinations of participation by appropriate constituencies, or the factual basis of those opinions. Lacking this clarity, the university first sought to identify reasons for the perceived process and communication weaknesses and then responded to those identified reasons to improve transparency and collaboration in PBA processes and information.

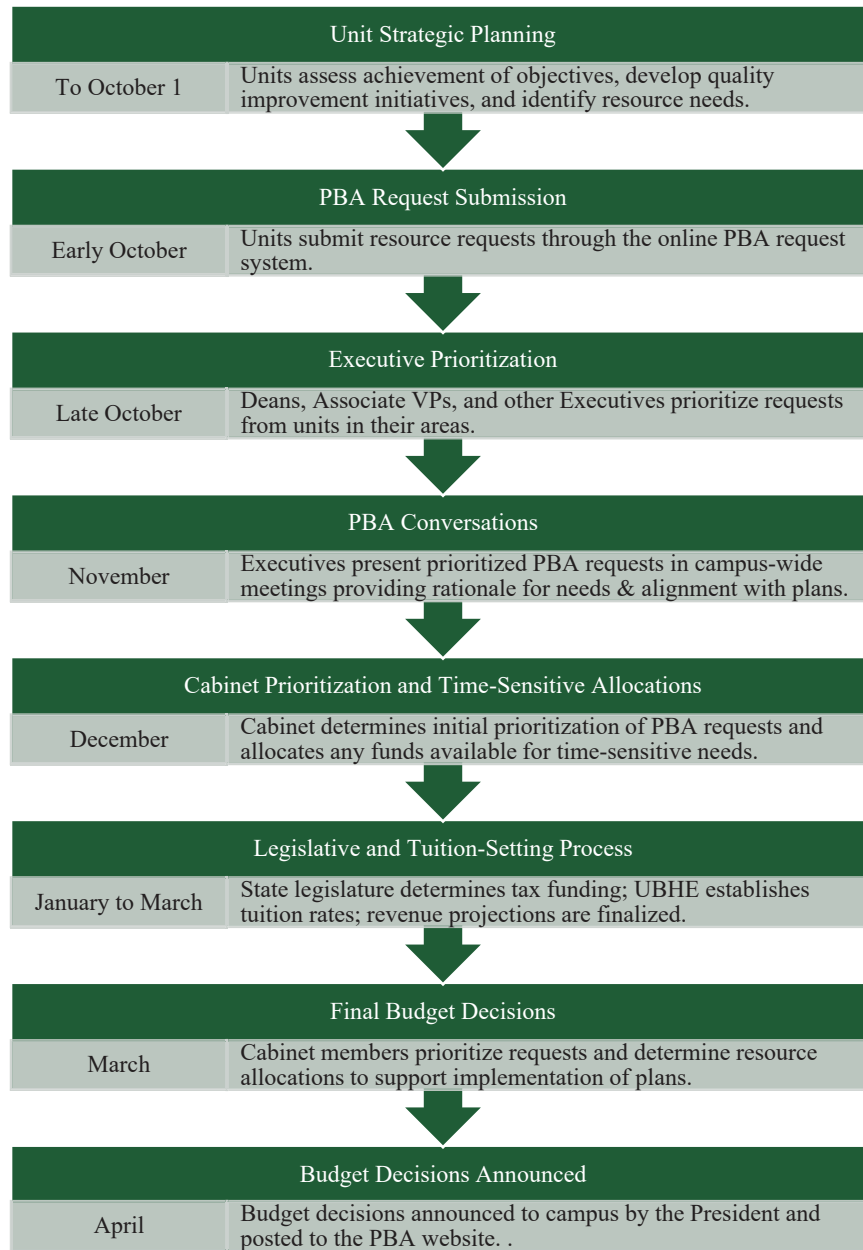
### UVU's PBA Process

UVU Planning, Budget, and Assessment (PBA) process ensures alignment of unit activities and resource allocation with comprehensive planning through one of the most open planning and budgeting processes in higher education. Unit strategic plans assess achievement of unit objectives and develop response strategies that reflect assessment findings. Budget requests must be justified as implementing these strategies. Requests are submitted through an online system and prioritized first by administrative unit directors or academic department chairs (the only levels of management below executives with budgetary authority), ensuring that nearly all employees have no more than second-level access to the initial decision maker.

Requests are then prioritized by executives, who are required to present their budget priorities to the entire campus community in open "PBA Conversation" meetings. PowerPoint files for each presentation are made available on the PBA website. Executives have an opportunity to refine and reprioritize requests prior to the Provost and individual Vice President's prioritizing requests in their division. Final allocation decisions are made by the Cabinet (President, Provost, and Vice Presidents) in an iterative process involving executives reporting to them. Allocation decisions along with the overall budget circumstances and rationale for allocation strategy is announced by the president at an annual budget address with several hundred faculty, staff, and administrators present. The budget allocations are also posted on the PBA website. The budget allocations are then implemented into the budget which is approved by the Board of Trustees. This process is illustrated in Figure 5.1.

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<sup>1</sup> Northwest Commission on Colleges and Universities, *Year Seven Peer Evaluation Report: Utah Valley University*, November 29, 2017, p. 29 (emphasis added).



**Figure 5.1: UVU Planning, Budget, and Assessment (PBA) process**

Since 2016, planning information is communicated to leaders at all levels through the annual All-Leadership Meeting. This meeting brings together UVU executives, deans, and their management direct reports (generally, unit leaders down to the director or department chair level) to consider planning challenges and opportunities and university-wide goals for the coming year, and to discuss resource allocation priorities for units throughout the university. UVU’s leaders are asked to consider how they can direct their units toward these priorities within the context of their specific mission and objectives. The meeting serves as a keynote to the university’s unit strategic planning and PBA activities.

The focus of UVU’s comprehensive planning is on the mission and action commitments, with three components articulating the comprehensive planning for the university: the evaluation of mission fulfillment, the *Vision 2030* strategic plan, extended-term thematic institutional plans for specific

dimensions of the mission and action commitments, and the annual unit strategic planning and PBA process. As UVU noted in responding to 2010 Standard 3.A.1 in its *Year Seven Self-Evaluation Report to the Northwest Commission on Colleges and Universities*:

All of these components utilize integrated planning, assessment, decision-making, and, where appropriate, resource allocation processes that should not be understood separately. Similarly, comprehensive, core theme, and program and service planning are fully integrated and should not be understood as distinct processes.<sup>2</sup>

UVU's comprehensive planning processes ensure that plans are broad-based and offer opportunities for input by, and are made available to, appropriate constituencies. The bi-annual mission fulfillment self-evaluations and SWOT analyses are prepared by the University Planning Advisory Committee (UPAC), which include key leaders and more than 30 faculty and staff members representing every administrative division and school or college at UVU. These evaluations are reviewed by President's Council and the Board of Trustees, and then made available to the entire campus community. *Vision 2030* and the university's thematic plans—*Inclusion Plan 2020–2024*, *Digital Transformation Task Force Report* (2019), *Completion Plan 2.0: Completion by Design* (2019), *Academic Master Plan 2018*, *Campus Master Plan* (2016), and *Strategic Plan for Managing Growth 2016-2025 Update*—were developed using both campus-wide meetings and the university's shared governance structure.

#### Actions in Response to Recommendation

UVU has used surveys, including analysis of the ModernThink/Chronicle of Higher Education Great Colleges to Work For Survey, and discussions through its shared governance structures to better understand the perception that the PBA process and decisions are not effectively communicated below the executive level. Through these discussions, the university has identified several aspects of engagement and communication related to PBA as contributing to the belief that PBA should be more transparent:

- Units in which strategic plans were developed and budget requests and prioritization decisions made solely by unit managers
- Units in which communications to leaders from those responsible for managing the PBA process were not disseminated to front-line staff responsible for planning and budget activities
- Poor communication of the basis for the university's mission (particularly for the relationship between research and teaching, the open admissions policy, and faculty workload) and its relationship to resource allocation
- Poor communication of the university's budget structure and of the constraints imposed on it as a state entity
- A lack of training in organizational communication skills for many people managers, especially among those in academic departments

However, the university also found several attitudes and behaviors of faculty and staff that challenge the assignment of responsibility for engagement and communication entirely to the university administration:

- Exceptionally low participation from faculty and staff in PBA conversation meetings at department, division, school and college, and university levels, which is directly related to perceived opacity in the PBA process

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<sup>2</sup> Utah Valley University, *Year Seven Self-Evaluation Report to the Northwest Commission on Colleges and Universities*, September 13, 2017, p. 164.

- Clearly unreasonable expectations on the part of some faculty and staff such as direct, individualized communication from the president to every submitter of a budget request that go far beyond normal practices in any higher education institution
- An unsubstantiated perception among some faculty and staff that the PBA process is *pro forma* and done for appearances to legitimize decisions that have already been made by the Vice President for Planning, Budget, and Human Resources and the Budget Office
- Employees who said that they feel that they are rarely consulted in decisions that affect them or feel that senior leaders do not listen to them stated further that they are primarily concerned with the day-to-day operational activities rather than strategic planning, budgeting, and assessment

The information gathered was reviewed by the University Executive Council to identify PBA process improvement strategies. In particular, an emphasis has been placed on the importance of effective communication by leaders at levels of the institution.

The recommendation nonetheless identifies problems that the university takes seriously, as the problems limit its ability to operate as the university community believes a university should. UVU has responded to these concerns by emphasizing the following:

- The University Executive Council and President's Council have stressed to all leaders the importance of open communication with faculty and staff. In particular, executives have made concerted efforts to provide open PBA conversations within their school/college or division. Executives have reported mixed success in faculty and staff engagement in these conversations.
- President Astrid Tuminez has initiated regular "Talk with Tuminez" online meetings open to all employees, including question and answer time, to bridge communication gaps between senior leadership and faculty and staff.
- The university has initiated a "Great University to Work For" initiative addressing several findings of the Great Colleges survey, including communication between managers and those reporting to them. A description of the program is included in the appendix to this report.
- Human Resources has expanded availability of its Crucial Conversations training, initiated a UVULEAD program for middle management to improve leaders' communication skills, and instituted a People Managers Excellence Training program for all managers, including those in academic departments.
- Institutional Effectiveness, Planning, and Accreditation Support has added a component to its strategic planning training stressing that strategic planning and resource allocation is a leadership function that necessarily involves participation by subordinate leaders and employees rather than an administrative function performed solely by the unit leader.
- The University Planning Advisory Council has developed a statement clarifying the basis for the university's mission in state law and Utah State Board of Regents policies. This statement has been shared through presentations in shared governance organizations and on the president's website. This statement is included in the documentary appendix to this report.)
- The Vice President for Planning, Budget, and Human Resources has developed a budget structure and process presentation that has been presented to the university's shared governance organizations, in the UVSELF leadership development forum, and at the annual "Summer University" staff development event. The Vice President for Planning, Budget, and Human Resources has invited those who could not attend the PBA conversations to view the presentations on the Budget Office website, recommended that employees raise questions and provide input to their executive leaders, and solicited comments via email on specific budget requests and the PBA process generally.

The university will continue to evaluate its PBA process and communications to promote continuous improvement and transparency while supporting a community of accountability among administrators, faculty, staff, and students.

### Results of Actions

Considering its understanding of the basis for the recommendation, analysis of current practice, improvements implemented as a result of the recommendation, UVU has concluded that its comprehensive planning process fully satisfy 2010 Standards 3.A.1 and 3.A.2 and 2020 Standard 1.B.3. UVU's practices make it a national model for communication of plans and for broad-based budgeting and planning. In responding to the commission's recommendation, UVU has continued to improve its comprehensive planning processes, establishing a benchmark for compliance with 2020 Standard 1.B.3.

The College of Health and Public Service (CHPS) has been the university's leader in enhanced communication and transparency in the PBA process. CHPS leaders and staff began their strategic planning for the 2018-19 academic year in Spring 2018, well in advance of most units (which typically conduct planning in the fall to coincide with PBA deadlines). This allowed the administration, faculty, and staff to clarify the college's expectations and priorities for budget requests well in advance of department planning. CHPS initiated internal PBA conversations at the college and department levels open to the entire college. The dean of the college and the college's finance manager met with department chairs before budget requests were submitted to communicate priorities. In the fall, the dean sent the college's PBA presentation to all college employees before the PBA conversations. He invited President Tuminez to provide an overview of her perspectives on budget requests to the entire college, noting her priorities, the vast gap between the total funds requested and funds likely to be available, and her encouragement to attend the PBA conversations to improve faculty and staff understanding of allocation decisions.

UVU's findings about participation and the experience of some units who have taken similar steps to improve the PBA process does demonstrate the difficulty of aspiring to full transparency and engagement. UVU's efforts to understand perceived lack of transparency has found that employees' failure to meet their corresponding responsibility to take advantage of opportunities to participate often appears to them as a failure of institutional transparency. For example, recognizing that its faculty were among those most concerned with budgetary transparency, the College of Humanities and Social Sciences also hosted a college-level PBA Conversation. Unfortunately, despite repeated announcements, no faculty attended the first such meeting other than the department chairs who were presenting. This challenge is not unique to UVU and show why it is unlikely that any university will attain consensus among faculty and staff that it is practicing full transparency.

However, the CHPS success, one of several, demonstrates the value of improving the execution of the PBA process that is already among the more open and broad-based of any higher education institution. Through its PBA process, UVU strives to be a model of integrated planning, assessment, and resource allocation that engages faculty, staff, and leaders across the university and provides transparency in budget requests and allocations. The assessment and improvements resulting from the commission's recommendation have strengthened the process; improved the transparency of the planning, budgeting, and assessment process below the executive level; and provided more consistent communication across departments, schools, colleges, and administrative units.

Campus plans and budget information are available to any constituency—faculty, staff, administration, students, and the general public—through PBA conversations and websites. Moreover, the improvements made to the PBA process along with recent university-wide planning efforts that engaged the campus community (such as the revised mission framework, *Vision 2030*, and *Inclusion Plan 2020–2024*) demonstrate UVU's compliance with 2020 Standard 1.B.3 “that [the institution's] planning process is inclusive and offers opportunities for comment by appropriate constituencies.”



## 5.4 Recommendation 4: Sustainability Planning

While the evaluators recognize the strength of the institution's budgeting component of the PBA process, the evaluators recommend that UVU strengthen the planning and assessment components of the PBA process to ensure the adequacy of its human and financial resources, capacity, and effectiveness of operations to document its ongoing potential to fulfill its mission, accomplish its core theme objectives, and achieve the goals or intended outcomes of its programs and services, wherever offered and however delivered (Standard 5.B.1).

UVU is required to address this recommendation in the Mid-Cycle Report and is pleased to report its progress to the commission.

Recommendations 3 (which the commission determined was satisfied following the 2019 *Mission and Core Themes Report*) and 4 share a common context. Both the university and the commission have recognized the substantive connection between planning for programs and services in 2010 Standard 4.A.5 and planning for sustainability in 2010 Standard 5.B.1. The fully integrated nature of UVU's comprehensive, action commitment, and program and service planning processes described in its 2017 *Year Seven Self-Evaluation Report* makes it challenging to entirely separate sustainable mission fulfillment and planning for programs and services. The university's responses to these recommendations are thus closely connected, and UVU advises consideration of the commission's satisfaction with action on Recommendation 3 in its 2019 *Mission and Core Themes Report* in evaluating progress on this recommendation.

### Expectations under 2010 and 2020 NWCCU Standards

UVU is aware of the pressures that enrollment growth places on overall sustainability. NWCCU 2010 Standard 5.B.1 requires that UVU's assessment processes address the university's capacity to sustainably fulfill its mission and implicitly expects that those processes demonstrate that institutions do, in fact, have adequate resources to do so.

2010 Standard 5.B.1 has no clear counterpart in the 2020 standards. It is closely related to 2020 Standard 1.B.4:

The institution monitors its internal and external environments to identify current and emerging patterns, trends, and expectations. Through its governance system it considers such findings to assess its strategic position, define its future direction, and review and revise, as necessary, its mission, planning, intended outcomes of its programs and services, and indicators of achievement of its goals.

2020 Standard 1.B.4 reiterates with minor changes 2010 Standard 5.B.3 but does not reiterate the content of 2010 Standard 5.B.1 specifically. UVU, however, sees significant overlap between 2010 Standards 5.B.1 and 5.B.3, and believes that a planning process that meets 2020 Standard 1.B.4 necessarily addresses the sustainability of mission fulfillment as it assesses strategic position, future directions, and student success.

### University Intentions

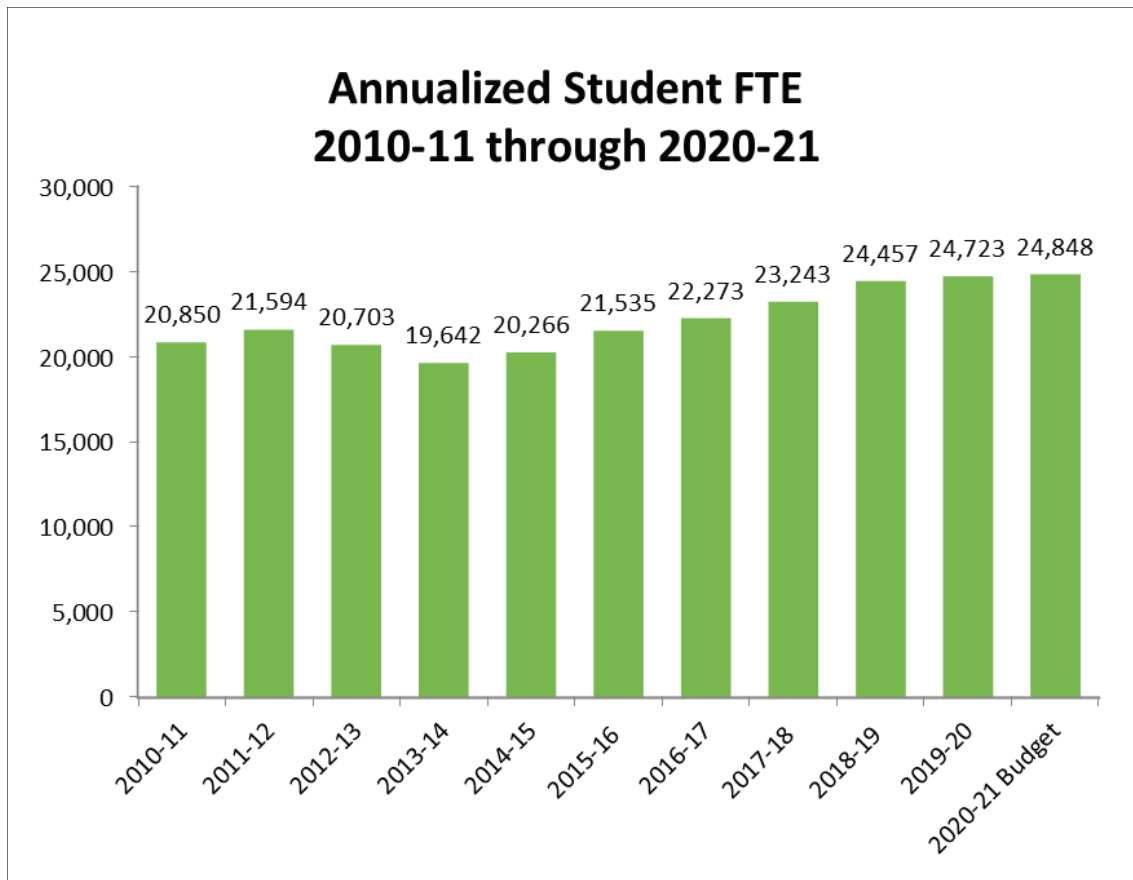
Based on the commission's reports during the 2010–2017 accreditation cycle, UVU understands the focus of concern in this recommendation to be the pressure that growth may place on the university's ability to secure and allocate sufficient resources to sustainably fulfill its mission without taking an unjustifiable risk that growth—and the resources presumed to accompany it—will subside. UVU recognizes that it cannot be successful without careful understanding of growth pressures, planning to respond to growth, and acquiring and allocating resources.



In response to this recommendation UVU pursues excellence in 2020 Standard 1.B.4 in the face of growth pressures by continuing to make growth a central feature of its institutional planning processes. UVU has established an institutional strategic plan (*Vision 2030*) that focuses on delivering student success while meeting regional educational needs, monitors its short- and long-term environments for changes in community growth trajectories, secures public and private resources to support its programs, and maintains comprehensive plans to address growth effects. These actions will ensure that UVU can sustainably fulfill its mission in a growth-centric environment.

**UVU’s Planning and Assessment Practices**

As an open admissions university under Utah State Board of Regents policy<sup>3</sup> in a service region that has seen sustained, rapid growth for more than three decades, UVU has long recognized that it cannot sustainably fulfill its mission without planning for sustained growth. It has consistently upheld a culture of strategic planning, assessment, continuous improvement, and accountability that secures and strategically allocates resources to achieve institutional objectives in the face of current and anticipated regional educational needs. UVU is acutely aware that the immediate effects of unplanned growth can undermine program quality, while short-term growth can lead to institutional dependence on growth that cannot be sustained when growth bubbles burst. UVU thus prioritizes sustainable growth planning throughout its planning and assessment processes.



**Figure 5.2: Annualized student FTE enrollment history**

<sup>3</sup> Utah State Board of Regents, “Utah System of Higher Education and Institutional Mission and Roles,” policy R312-7.2 (May 18, 2018).

### Enrollment and Resource Growth

UVU is certainly challenged by growth, but this is not a new challenge nor one that the university has not consistently met throughout its history. The university's recent growth is substantial but by no means unprecedented. Since becoming a community college in 1987, UVU has seen annual enrollment decline in only four years, two of which were in the 2010–2017 accreditation cycle; 25 of those years have set enrollment records. The three-year and five-year growth rates in the 2017-18 academic year, the year the commission issued its recommendation, were all below median for the previous 30 years. Three-year growth rates were above 20% throughout the 1990s, rates UVU saw only once in the 2010–2017 accreditation cycle. UVU saw double-digit annual growth seven times between 1987 and 2010. UVU's recent enrollment history is shown in Figure 5.2.

This growth reflects UVU's mission and community. The Provo–Orem Metropolitan Statistical Area is currently the eighth fastest growing metropolitan region in the United States, and the third fastest growing one with over 500,000 residents. Utah County's population has more than tripled since the institution became a community college.

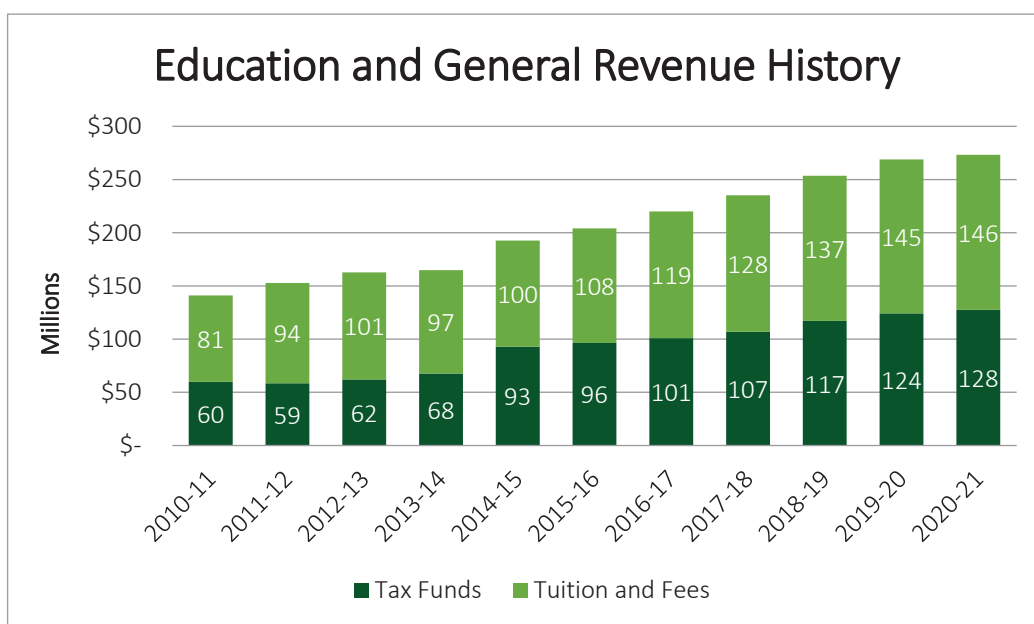


Figure 5.3: Revenue from state Education and General Revenue Funds

UVU has demonstrated exceptional success in securing the resources needed to support its growth. While states such as Illinois, Wisconsin, and Oklahoma essentially privatized their higher education systems, Utah made a statewide commitment to increase educational attainment through a robust public higher education system. The State Higher Education Executive Officers Association found that between 2012 and 2017, 13 states reduced their per-FTE higher education appropriations, and 43 states saw declines in enrollment<sup>4</sup>—a dangerous combination to be sure. UVU, however, has countered this trend. Total state tax fund appropriations nearly doubled between fiscal years 2011-12 and 2017-18, from \$58.5 million to \$106.9 million, and per-FTE tax fund appropriations grew from \$2,711 to \$4,728. State tax funds rose from 38.2% of operating revenue to 45.4% during this time. Critical to this success was a 2014-15 initiative of the Utah System of Higher Education, Governor Gary Herbert, and the Utah State Legislature to provide ongoing acute equity funding statewide to address the effects of disproportionate growth across

<sup>4</sup> [State Higher Education Executive Officers Association, "State Higher Education Finance: FY 2017," 2018, pp. 23, 26.](#)

USHE institutions. UVU received \$21 million, the largest share of any institution. Further, the Utah System of Higher Education annual budget request to the legislature has, since the 2017-18 fiscal year, included a request for growth funding. From fiscal years 2017-18 through 2019-20, the legislature appropriated over \$5.5 million in tax funds to UVU to support growth. For 2020-21, the legislature had appropriated \$2.9 million in new tax funds to support growth at UVU; unfortunately, the economic impact of COVID-19 resulted in that appropriation being reversed.

UVU's success in securing public support has been matched by expanding private contributions, which have exceeded \$20 million annually since 2016.

UVU has used both state and private resources to support growth through a significant expansion of its physical facilities. The university has added more than one million square feet to its physical facilities, topping three million square feet and still growing. Major new buildings completed since 2010 on the main campus include the recently opened Noorda Center for the Performing Arts, Clarke Classroom Building, Melisa Nellesen Center for Autism, Science Building, Student Life and Wellness Center, NUVI Basketball Center, and Barbara Barrington Jones Family Foundation Wee Care Center. Currently under construction is the Scott C. Keller Business Building (180,000 square foot building) set to be open in January 2022. UVU recently acquired an over 103,000-square-foot building in Lehi as part of its commitment to growth and community engagement. UVU also added 225 acres of undeveloped land in Vineyard, Utah, approximately two miles from the main campus, as well as 38.7 acres of land in Payson with easy access to Interstate 15 for future satellite campuses.

### *Growth Planning*

UVU's main comprehensive planning tool during the previous accreditation cycle was a set of institutional plans for major areas of operations across the university: *Inclusion Plan 2020–2024*, *Digital Transformation Task Force Report* (2019), *Completion Plan 2.0: Completion by Design* (2019), *Academic Master Plan 2018*, *Campus Master Plan* (2016), and *Strategic Plan for Managing Growth 2016-2025 Update*. Growth and resource management are major features of each plan, ensuring that alignment, correlation, and integration of programs and services is done with full consideration to growth pressures and resource availability. This approach has significant advantages over a traditional episodic and comprehensive planning process, as planning is rooted in needs and areas of activity rather than abstract principles. UVU's planning process has given the university a robust culture of intentional action and continuous improvement that comprehensively addresses the major directions of the university. These key operational plans are included as appendices to this report.

The *Campus Master Plan* is designed to accommodate physical growth needs for the next 40 years. The plan provides a long-range vision for the existing Orem Campus and the planned Vineyard site on 225 acres owned by the university approximately two miles from the main campus. The general concept of the plan is to maintain the Orem Campus as the academic hub of the university, using the Vineyard site as a support, athletics, and specialized programs facility and regional locations to meet specific community educational needs. The plan was last updated in 2016 with the approval of the UVU Board of Trustees and the Utah State Board of Regents.

Since 2016, planning information, including demographic and enrollment projections, is communicated to leaders at all levels through the annual All-Leadership Meeting. This meeting brings together UVU executives, deans, and their management direct reports (generally, unit leaders down to the director or department chair level) to consider planning challenges and opportunities and university-wide goals for the coming year, and to discuss resource allocation priorities for units throughout the university. UVU's leaders are asked to consider how they can direct their units toward these priorities within the context of their specific mission and objectives. The meeting serves as a keynote to the university's unit strategic planning and PBA activities.

### Actions in Response to Recommendation

In June 2018, the UVU Board of Trustees approved the *University Strategic Planning Integration* report. The report provided a cohesive summary of UVU's major planning efforts by identifying common elements of the major plans that were driving achievement of the mission, core themes, and administrative imperatives across the university, providing a comprehensive view of our commitment to student success. The *University Strategic Planning Integration* report established critical context for program development and prioritization processes.

As statewide concerns about regional educational needs in Utah County became central to the state Higher Education Strategic Planning Commission's efforts, the *University Strategic Planning Integration* report evolved into a full strategic plan for the university. *Vision 2030* is a 10-year vision outlining how UVU's integrated dual mission will meet the higher education and workforce needs of Utah County, UVU's service region, and the state of Utah.

*Vision 2030* is built on a 60-year track record of success for Utah's integrated dual-mission universities. Rather than duplicate expensive independent institutions, the Utah State Legislature and USHE established an innovative and differentiated role for the state's regional universities that combined the traditional roles of community college and teaching university in a single organizational and academic structure, which Utah refers to as "integrated dual mission" institutions. A detailed description of Utah's integrated dual-mission institutions is included as an appendix to this report. Such leadership, foresight, and generosity have resulted in a higher education system that works, with three integrated dual-mission universities that serve as national models for accessible, affordable, and effective public higher education.

Under *Vision 2030*, UVU is poised to meet the expanding needs of its service region by sustaining Utah's successful integrated dual-mission institution model. UVU has developed innovative solutions to address future growth and fulfill its designated role as an integrated dual-mission university within the Utah System of Higher Education. *Vision 2030* proposes three strategies supporting UVU's three action commitments that will enable the integrated dual-mission approach to meet Utah County's growing demand for higher education:

1. **ACHIEVE:** Enhance Student Success and Accelerate Completion of Meaningful Credentials.
2. **INCLUDE:** Improve Accessibility, Flexibility, and Affordability for All Current and Future UVU Students
3. **ENGAGE:** Strengthen Partnerships for Community, Workforce, and Economic Development

The plan identifies ten priority initiatives supporting these three strategies. These initiatives represent UVU's commitment to its mission as it ambitiously strives to serve the growing and diversifying student population and dynamic economy of its region. The initiatives will be implemented in three phases between 2019 and 2030.

Utah's integrated dual-mission approach has been a resounding success statewide, leading to the relatively high attainment of associate degrees among Utah residents and facilitating retention of associate degree students through the bachelor's degree. It has done so efficiently, taking advantage of economies of scale and minimizing the duplication of facilities and services that would have been very costly if Utah operated a traditional model of separate and independent community colleges and regional universities. Relying on this model, UVU has strengthened its commitment to quality, access, affordability, and flexibility while setting enrollment records nearly every year this century. UVU's track record underlines the integrated dual-mission approach as vital to meeting regional educational needs while addressing the challenge of growth.

The previously existing comprehensive plans, an updated mission statement, new action commitments, and core values guided the development of *Vision 2030*. To the previously existing set of plans, UVU has

added a Digital Transformation Plan. Technology will be essential to provide an engaging, supportive, flexible, and inclusive student experience that leads to success, expands UVU's educational capacity, and responsibly stewards students' and taxpayers' resources. The Digital Transformation Task Force chaired by then-Senior Vice President for Academic Affairs Jeffery Olson, prepared an initial report for using digital technology to meet the pressing need for growth with quality in April 2019, making recommendations in 10 areas of digital technology. A newly created position of vice president of Digital Transformation will lead UVU in adopting innovative technologies and strategies to transform campus services, effectively use information, and optimize student learning. The *Digital Transformation Task Force Report* is included as an appendix to this report.

UVU has taken several steps to improve the strategic planning and assessment elements of the PBA process to ensure that resource allocation is better aligned to identified needs. All units with independent budget authority (generally, down to the director or department chair level) must be specifically addressed in a strategic plan, either having their own or, in appropriate cases where greater integration of units is necessary, being addressed explicitly within a parent unit plan. Institutional Effectiveness, Planning and Accreditation Support has significantly expanded its planning and assessment training program, offering workshops year-round to encourage less episodic planning and adding in-depth workshops on mission statements and objectives, assessment methods, SWOT analyses, quality improvement initiatives, and budget and planning integration. The PBA conversations now include enhanced accountability components to ensure that strategic resource allocations are implemented in accordance with their intended purposes and the supporting assessment findings.

### Results of Actions

UVU continues to analyze its growth pressures to ensure that it is prepared to meet the needs of its students and the community. The long-term growth trend UVU has experienced throughout its existence will, by all available evidence, continue for the foreseeable future. Even during the uncertainty of the COVID-19 pandemic, UVU had its largest Summer semester enrollment and enrollments for Fall 2020 are ahead of Fall 2019.

Foundational to the development of *Vision 2030* was a detailed analysis of growth trends both among students and the region. Implementation and assessment of *Vision 2030* anticipates a full update of the Strategic Plan for Managing Growth will be completed in Spring 2021, which will include increased attention to strategic enrollment management. This will require the kind of innovation that UVU has always pursued, adapting strategic enrollment management practices generally designed for selective institutions to meet the needs of an open-admission institution in a rapidly growing region.

Findings of interim analyses conducted as part of the annual enrollment projection process and the *Vision 2030* development process are consistent with current planning. The Kem C. Gardner Policy Institute at the University of Utah projects that UVU's service region will grow by 1.1 million residents—nearly twice its current population—between 2015 and 2065.<sup>5</sup> Since UVU became a university in 2008, its service region has added more than 51,000 primary and secondary school students, 40.7% of the state's total growth.<sup>6</sup> UVU will continue to see strong regional demand for higher education among both traditional and nontraditional students well into the 2030's.

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<sup>5</sup> Pamela S. Perlich, Mike Hollingshaus, Emily R. Harris, Juliette Tennert, and Michael T. Hogue, "[Research Brief: Utah's Long-Term Demographic and Economic Projections Summary](#)," Kem C. Gardner Policy Institute (July 2017).

<sup>6</sup> Utah State Board of Education, "[Fall Enrollment by Grade Level Reports](#)," 2004-2005 through 2019-2020.



As an open-admission university under state law and Board of Regents policy, UVU does not have the direct enrollment management tools that selective institutions use to shape enrollment. Regional growth is thus expected to continue to translate into sustained enrollment growth. UVU updates 10-year enrollment projections annually, based on a methodology that accounts for historical enrollment trends, short-term enrollment fluctuations, and long-term regional conditions. The methodology and projections are reviewed annually by the institutional research committee of the Office of the Commissioner of Higher Education and the institutional research and effectiveness staff of all USHE institutions. UVU's ten-year enrollment projections anticipate an additional 16,295 students and 9,762 FTE by Fall 2029. Headcount will exceed 50,000 by 2024. This deep understanding of UVU's growth environment has led the university to conclude unequivocally that growth is a long-term feature of its environment and thus that continuing to expand programs and services remains essential if it is to fulfill its mission.

In November 2019, the Board of Regents approved a new funding formula for enrollment growth and is working with the legislature to not only acquire annual appropriations of tax funds for growth but to institute a funding earmark for growth. Through sound fiscal management and financial reserves, UVU is prepared for non-linearity in growth, including the possibility of short-term enrollment downturns. In its most recently available financial report for the year ending June 30, 2019,<sup>7</sup> the university reported having \$100.9 million in cash and cash equivalent assets and \$282.4 million in total non-capital assets at the end of the year against operating expenses of \$359.4 million (including student financial aid and auxiliaries). UVU had net income of \$54.7 million. Its Primary Reserve Ratio (net position as a percentage of operating expenses, a measure of overall financial strength) is 51%, well above the typical 40% threshold. UVU's Debt Burden Ratio was 1.5% of total expenditures, well below the 7% considered normal, and its viability ratio (expendable net position to debt) is 4.0, indicating that UVU has four times the expendable assets needed to fully satisfy all debts.

UVU's resource strategies continue to ensure that it has sufficient resources to support existing and new programs and services. For the 2019-20 fiscal year, UVU received a 6.1% increase in appropriated base tax funds as well as an additional 6% in tuition revenue from a combination of enrollment growth and a 1.7% tuition rate change. These new revenues supported the addition of 42 full-time faculty and 52 full-time staff to improve quality and respond to demands of a growing student body and new academic programs. UVU maintained its commitment to providing a high quality, serious education by once again meeting its goal of delivering over 55% of instruction by full-time faculty, with full-time faculty delivering 58% of instruction in fall 2019. Reflecting UVU's commitment to student access and affordability, general student fees increased 1.2% after remaining constant for three years.

In March 2020, the Utah legislature appropriated \$12 million in new tax funds to UVU and the Board of Regents approved a tuition increase of 1.38% and a general student fee increase of 2.3%. Given the uncertain impact of COVID-19, the legislature informed us that new funding should not be allocated and would most likely be reversed. Leadership immediately instituted financial and human resource restrictions so that UVU would have maximum fiscal flexibility. In subsequent special legislative sessions, the majority of the new tax funds were reversed and the base tax fund budget was reduced by 2.5%. These changes are reflected in UVU's 2020-21 operating budget (PDF) and summarized in Table 5.1. Even with the 2.5% tax fund reduction, UVU's 2020-21 operating budget is 1.6% higher than in 2019-20. Through the CARES Act, UVU has received two appropriations for institutional use totaling over \$12.6 million. These resources have been invaluable in UVU's response to the change in delivery of instruction as a result of COVID-19. UVU is well-positioned to provide its students the affordable access

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<sup>7</sup> UVU's [2019 Annual Financial Report \(PDF\) is available online](#) and included as a separate appendix file. It could not be combined in the single-file documentary appendix due to file security measures protecting the integrity of the information.



and resources they need to achieve their academic goals. The 2020-21 operating budget is included as an appendix to this report.

Education and General Revenue Funds	2019-20 Initial Budget	Changes for 2020-21 Budget	2020-21 Initial Budget
<b>Tax Funds</b>	<b>\$124,167,500</b>	<b>\$3,337,700</b>	<b>\$127,505,200</b>
Performance Based Funding FY20 (Senate Bill 1)		\$4,897,900	
Engineering Initiative (House Bill 2)		\$700,000	
Health Benefits Rate Increase (Senate Bill 8)		\$927,800	
Internal Service Funds (House Bill 8)		\$137,500	
Attorney General Adjustment (House Bill 2)		-\$107,900	
2.5% General Reduction		-\$3,217,600	
<b>Dedicated Credits</b>	<b>\$144,741,800</b>	<b>\$947,300</b>	<b>\$145,689,100</b>
2020-21 Tuition Increase		\$1,956,300	
2019-20 Enrollment Based Tuition Revenue		-\$4,304,700	
2019-20 Tuition Waivers		\$3,150,000	
Shift of Expensed Scholarships to Two-year Gap Funding & Completion Tuition Waivers		-\$689,000	
2020-21 Tuition from Enrollment in New/Expanding Programs		\$930,200	
Other Revenue Changes (fees, write-offs/collections, rental, etc.)		-\$95,500	
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>\$268,909,300</b>	<b>\$4,285,000</b>	<b>\$273,194,300</b>
		<b>1.6%</b>	

**Table 5.1: Revenue changes, fiscal years 2019-20 to 2020-21**

The improvement in strategic planning, budget, and assessment processes has strengthened the connection between resource allocation and assessment. Institutional Effectiveness, Planning, and Accreditation Support evaluates PBA requests annually for their use of strategic planning and assessment findings. Between the 2015-16 and 2020-21 planning cycles, the percentage of requests that were effectively supported by evidence, planning, or assessment findings grew from 17% to 47%, while the number of unsupported requests fell by 75%. For the 2019-20 cycle (the last year for which funding decisions have been made), strongly supported requests were 58% more likely to be funded than unsupported requests. This demonstrates that the PBA process improvements are successful in promoting resource allocation based on strategic decision-making using demonstrated assessment needs.

## 5.5 Conclusion

As detailed above, UVU has substantively and effectively addressed the commission's recommendations. UVU's planning and assessment processes continue to identify ways to ensure that UVU can fulfill its mission. UVU's PBA process engages appropriate constituencies and improvements have been made in transparency and communication. UVU's planning and assessment processes support the acquisition and strategic allocation of resources to address demonstrated growth needs. UVU's growth alongside its community is essential to its ability to fulfill its mission. The results described above provide evidence of UVU's response to prior recommendations and compliance with 2020 Standards 1.B.3 (Recommendation 2) and 1.B.4 (Recommendation 4).