



TO: President Astrid S. Tuminez

FROM: Susan L. Thackeray and Jeffrey Alan Johnson, Co-Chairs  
University Planning Advisory Committee

DATE: March 25, 2021

SUBJECT: 2020-21 UPAC Annual Report

UPAC has completed its annual work on university-wide planning activities consistent with its Standing Charge and the Presidential Charge for 2020-21. UPAC's charge this year focused on assessing mission fulfillment in the NWCCU Mid-Cycle Review and the biennial SWOT Analysis; working to inform and implement Vision 2030; understanding the efforts of the Higher Education Strategic Planning Commission and its likely implications for UVU; and contributing to the university's response to the COVID-19 pandemic. The committee successfully met all areas of its standing and presidential charges for 2020-21.

## **2020-21 ACCOMPLISHMENTS**

### **NWCCU Mid-Cycle Review**

*Presidential Charge: Participate in the NWCCU Mid-Cycle Review virtual site visit, communicating UPAC's role in the development and assessment of UVU's mission, action commitments, and objectives.*

*Standing Charge: Identifying meaningful, measurable, and verifiable indicators, measures, and benchmarks for evaluating achievement of UVU's mission, action commitments, and objectives in cooperation with other university organizations and in accordance with the standards and policies of the Northwest Commission on Colleges and Universities.*

UPAC was central to the university's successful NWCCU Mid-Cycle Review. UPAC met with the NWCCU evaluation committee during its October 22 meeting to discuss the university's process for evaluating mission fulfillment and the results of the baseline mission fulfillment analysis completed in 2019-20. The evaluation committee found that UPAC is a critical coordinating body for mission fulfillment. UPAC, they found, engages a diverse group of leaders in planning and decision making, respects the diversity of perspectives represented, and agrees on topics to share with colleagues after each meeting. Evaluators noted that the mission fulfillment analysis

findings demonstrated an honest, reflective process that led to continuous improvement. They praised UPAC for recognizing the need to address indicators still under development, particularly with regard to student learning, and recommended that the committee consider whether any indicators which still lack data to evaluate are truly central to the mission given the number of existing indicators.

UPAC members were also among those throughout the university that demonstrated the institution's clear commitment to student success. UVU faculty and staff showed "sincerity about the importance of focusing on the student experience by removing barriers, creating pathways, and assessing indicators that would have the most impact on learning and graduation. People from a wide variety of institutional offices espoused a pride and commitment to serving the population of students enrolled at an open admissions university such as UVU. There was a demonstrated understanding of how policies and practices will ensure student success for such an academically diverse student population."

The Mid-Cycle Review was accepted by NWCCU in January 2021. On the basis of the evaluators' report, all recommendations from the Fall 2017 institutional evaluation were considered satisfied.

UPAC reviewed the mission fulfillment process in light of the NWCCU recommendations and findings of the 2019-20 mission fulfillment analysis on February 18 and March 4. Due to the large number of detailed issues, the committee recommended that they be taken up in early 2021-22 by the committee that will conduct the mission fulfillment progress report. Institutional Effectiveness, Planning, and Accreditation Support will work over the summer to ensure that external data will be available to present to UPAC before the mission fulfillment analysis begins.

### **SWOT Analysis**

*Presidential Charge: Conduct UVU's biennial SWOT (strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats) analysis to help inform this year's strategic planning at UVU.*

*Standing Charge: Assessing whether UVU is fulfilling its mission, action commitments, and objectives and whether it will be able to do so sustainably in its foreseeable internal and external operating environments.*

The SWOT analysis was a major focus of UPAC activity throughout the year. The primary purpose of the SWOT analysis is to identify internal structural factors and external issues that will affect UVU's ability to fulfill its mission on an ongoing basis. It thus complements the mission fulfillment review process, which is oriented toward determining the extent to which past actions have contributed to fulfilling the mission.

UPAC reviewed several issues of importance to the university before beginning the analysis process. These included:

- Great Colleges to Work For survey results (Taylor Lovell, Institutional Research, September 24)

- Utah demographic trends (Pam Perlich, Kem C. Gardner Institute, November 5)
- Discussion with state legislators (Steve Anderson, University Relations; Rep. Candice Pierucci, Utah House of Representatives; and Sen. Michael K. McKell, Utah Senate, December 3)
- Legislative priorities and actions (Stephen Whyte, University Relations, January 21 and March 18; Linda Makin, Planning and Budget, February 4 and March 4)

The committee conducted the SWOT analysis in four meetings between January 21 and March 18. It identified more than 30 specific factors of note affecting mission fulfillment, and five priority areas:

- Student Success
- Program and Course Delivery
- Faculty and Staff Quality and Working Conditions
- Academic Program Scope
- Internal Processes

UPAC intends to bring its findings to President's Council and other appropriate groups during the summer and fall of 2021.

### **COVID-19 Pandemic Response**

*Presidential Charge: Maintain awareness of the ways that the COVID-19 pandemic may affect mission fulfillment and assessment processes.*

*Presidential Charge: Investigate issues of importance to UVU's ability to sustainably fulfill its mission, action commitments, and objectives that the university or the committee may find appropriate.*

The COVID-19 pandemic was an overarching theme in most of UPAC's activities this year, with most discussions considering the effects of the pandemic on the university. UPAC also directly evaluated the effects of the pandemic during its December 3 meeting, noting a wide range of positive and negative effects on students, faculty, and staff. The committee noted that the university pivoted quickly, and that it was remarkable how many classes were moved online. Faculty and students have both been challenged to make online learning successful, with significant success but limitations as well. Students, committee members noted, do like the flexibility that solves complicated lives. But UVU is a "brick and mortar" institution that they signed up for, so the pendulum could swing back, and students may want more time in class. Remote work as helped with work-life balance but challenged communication and, in some cases, strained relations between labor and management and social connections between employees of all classes.

## Utah Board of Higher Education Transition

*Presidential Charge: Consider ways that UVU can effectively advance its integrated dual mission and respond to growth pressures by supporting the development and implementation of UVU Vision 2030, responding to the reports of the state Higher Education Strategic Planning Commission, and reviewing the planned update of the Strategic Plan for Managing Growth.*

*Presidential Charge: Understand, support, and, to the extent practicable, contribute to the higher education agenda of the Utah Board of Higher Education; support UVU's alignment of its intentions with those of UBHE as they evolve; and support UVU's responses to continuing efforts of the Higher Education Strategic Planning Commission.*

*Standing Charge: Reviewing the alignment of UVU planning efforts with initiatives and trends beyond the university, especially those of the State of Utah and the Utah Board of Higher Education (UBHE). This is especially important in light of the current legislative review of the future directions of Utah public higher education.*

UPAC paid close attention to the transition from the Utah System of Higher Education to the Utah Board of Higher Education that began following the 2020 legislative session. This was an important topic of discussion with state legislators on December 3. Linda Makin reported on the state attainment goals and UBHE affordability goals and strategies on January 21, and on the board's strategic plan on March 18. The committee will consider including state attainment goals in the mission fulfillment indicators prior to conducting the 2021-22 Mission Fulfillment Progress Report.

## Vision 2030 and other University Plans

*Presidential Charge: Support implementation of Vision 2030, in particular reviewing measures of achievement for the plan and coordinating Vision 2030 metrics with indicators for mission fulfillment.*

*Presidential Charge: Become informed about growth pressures and identify strategies for responding to growth pressures in support of a planned update of the Strategic Plan for Managing Growth, and review implementation of other major operational plans.*

*Presidential Charge: Investigate issues of importance to UVU's ability to sustainably fulfill its mission, action commitments, and objectives that the university or the committee may find appropriate.*

*Standing Charge: Advising the University Executive Committee and university leadership regarding the university's mission and goals. Of critical importance now and in the next few years is our completion goal of 45% by 2025.*

*Standing Charge: Reviewing new and revised major operational and unit master plans.*

UPAC reviewed and made recommendations on the following plans:

- Vision 2030 (Kyle Reyes, Student Affairs, September 24)
- Digital Transformation Plan (Kelly Flanagan, Digital Transformation, September 24)
- Completion Plan 2.0 (Michelle Kearns, Student Success and Retention, March 18)

The Strategic Plan for Managing Growth was incorporated into the Vision 2030 planning process and rescheduled for Fall 2021 implementation, with primary emphasis on its comprehensive growth analysis function that will inform ongoing implementation of Vision 2030. This will be an important item on the UPAC agenda for the coming year.

### **PBA Process**

*Standing Charge: Providing feedback for the Planning, Budget, and Assessment (PBA) process.*

UPAC members were encouraged to attend the PBA conversations when possible and asked to encourage their areas to attend to see the collaboration and understand the university budget process and substance. The committee recommended several improvements to Vice President for Planning and Budget Linda Makin at its December 3 meeting:

- The university should continue to offer PBA conversations virtually as well as in person to allow more participants. Teams was a great solution, and the university should consider using Teams Live because of the number of virtual participants.
- PBA needs to set realistic expectations as to what budget is and what has already been allocated, while leaders need to increase communication and be more transparent with PBA and discretionary funds.
- The PBA process needs to evaluate how the university commits money for technology and O&M when opening new facilities.
- PBA needs a mechanism to stabilize needs and gaps before strategically optimizing new activities.
- Programs should use data more routinely and effectively in making and prioritizing requests (retention rates, 45% goal, etc.).
- It is healthy to step back from the needs highlighted in the PBA process to see that Utah is doing remarkably well compared to other states.

### **Communication**

*Standing Charge: Providing recommendations and feedback regarding major presidential initiatives and addresses.*

*Standing Charge: Disseminating information presented to UPAC to the broader campus community and offering opportunity for input by constituencies.*

UPAC continued to expand use of Microsoft Teams and Box to improve communication by members with faculty, staff, and students in their areas. Due to the COVID-19 pandemic, all

UPAC meetings were online this year. UPAC met with Stephen Whyte on December 3 to discuss coordinating efforts with the International Advisory Board and the Woodbury School of Business National Advisory Board. The committee also held a follow-up discussion of the State of the University Address to enhance communication.

## **2021-22 PRESIDENTIAL CHARGE RECOMMENDATIONS**

UPAC recognizes that, like many of the university's governance organizations, its role is evolving with the university. Its range of vision and ability to promote cross-campus collaboration commends its value as an advisory body, communication forum, and working group for President's Council and the University Executive Council. Considering these roles and the evolution of the university's leadership structure, UPAC expects that its standing charge will remain relevant while evolving in detail.

We believe our value to the university will be maximized if our standing responsibilities continue to include:

### **Planning**

- Advising the University Executive Committee and President's Council regarding the university's mission and goals.
- Reviewing the alignment of UVU planning efforts with initiatives and trends beyond the university, especially those of the State of Utah and the Utah Board of Higher Education (UBHE).
- Reviewing new and revised major operational and unit master plans.
- Identifying specific areas of university operations and practices for focused improvement.
- Investigate issues of importance to UVU's ability to sustainably fulfill its mission, action commitments, and objectives that the university or the committee may find appropriate.

### **Assessment**

- Identifying meaningful, assessable, and verifiable indicators, measures, and benchmarks for evaluating achievement of UVU's mission, action commitments, and objectives in cooperation with other university organizations and in accordance with the standards of the NWCCU.
- Assessing whether UVU is fulfilling its mission, action commitments, and objectives in accordance with the standards of the NWCCU.
- Assessing UVU's ability to sustain fulfillment of its mission, action commitments, and objectives in its foreseeable internal and external operating environments.

### **Communication**

- Establishing communication practices to increase the dissemination of information from upper administration to the broader campus community and to offer opportunity for input by constituencies.
- Providing feedback for the Planning, Budget, and Assessment (PBA) process.

- Providing recommendations and feedback regarding major presidential initiatives and addresses.

### **Presidential Charge**

In addition to its standing charge, we recommend that UPAC's charge for 2021-22 specifically include the following:

- Conduct UVU's Mission Fulfillment Progress Report, considering revisions to the mission fulfillment indicators as appropriate based on the findings of the 2020 Mission Fulfillment Baseline Evaluation, the NWCCU Mid-Cycle Review, and other institutional priorities.
- Support implementation of Vision 2030, in particular reviewing measures of achievement for the plan and coordinating Vision 2030 metrics with indicators for mission fulfillment.
- Consider ways that UVU can respond to growth pressures on the university in support of a planned update of the Strategic Plan for Managing Growth, and review implementation of other key operational plans.
- Understand, support, and, to the extent practical, contribute to the higher education agenda of the Utah Board of Higher Education, and support UVU's alignment of its intentions with those of UBHE as they continue to evolve.

We also look forward to addressing other issues at the administration's request.

### **ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS**

UPAC is co-chaired by Susan L. Thackeray, Assistant Professor of Technology Management, and Jeffrey Alan Johnson, Director of Institutional Effectiveness, Planning, and Accreditation Support, with the executive sponsorship of Linda Makin, Vice President from Planning, Budget, and Human Resources. The committee is composed of 35 representatives from all areas of campus who are members of the committee *ex officio* or are appointed to serve two-year terms.

Dr. Thackeray's term as chair concludes this year. The committee expresses its deep appreciation for her capable leadership of the committee and service to the university over the past year. Eight appointed members of the committee have also completed their service on UPAC this year:

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|---------------|-----------------|----------------|
| • Suzy Cox    | • Adam Sanft    | • Phillip Witt |
| • Sara Lafkas | • Samantha Thee | • Ming Yu      |
| • Ben Moulton | • David Tobler  |                |

Please join us in thanking these UVU faculty, staff, and administrators for their service.

UPAC is pleased to have successfully supported the planning activities of the university this year. We believe that UPAC is an important instrument of shared governance at UVU, a central structure in UVU's transparent and collaborative decision-making processes that fosters a culture of planning, assessment, improvement, and accountability. UPAC thus appreciates the openness of your administration to UPAC's input and the actions it has taken to address the issues UPAC has raised. We look forward to continuing this important collaboration among students, staff, faculty, and the administration.