



March 13, 2020

2020 Legislative Session Report

Budget

Beginning July 1, 2020, the Legislature approved a \$90 million increase (8.2%) in ongoing tax funds and a one-time increase of \$1,750,500 for higher education. UVU budget priority items that received funding include (note: a detailed breakdown of what each institution will receive will come from USHE next week):

- \$27.4 million to support a 2.5% salary and wage increase and an 4.53% increase for health insurance;
- \$29.5 million Performance-based funding (UVU - \$5.4M)
- \$5 million for student enrollment growth (UVU - \$2.8M)
- \$2.4 million ongoing and \$772,400 one-time for SWI Grants (UVU Partnership with Bridgerland Tech, funding TBD)
- \$1.2 million ongoing and \$2 million one-time for Behavioral Health Workforce Reinvestment (UVU – TBD)
- \$300,300 UVU Utah Lake Project
- \$392,400 UVU Federalism Index Project

Capital Development

The Legislature funded four capital development priorities including all three of the top projects submitted to the Legislature as allowed under the statute. The Legislature also funded the land bank priority for Dixie State University as well as the bonding authorizations approved by the Board in November 2019. Finally, the Legislature appropriated 1.3% to the Capital Improvement Fund, .2% higher than statutorily required (\$150 million). All of this is fantastic news, as it clears the way for the new Engineering and Technology building at UVU.

State Funded Capital Projects

- SUU – Academic Classroom Building (\$43,013,700)
- UU – Applied Sciences Building (\$60,000,000)
- USU – Heravi Global Teaching and Learning Center (\$14,500,000)
- SLCC – Herriman Campus (\$30,800,600)
- DSU – Land Bank (\$15,075,000)

Legislation Summary

There were several pieces of legislation directly impacting Utah's public colleges and universities, chief of which was SB111 – reconstitutes the governance of higher education in Utah while combining the UTECH and USHE systems of colleges and universities. Altogether, over 50 pieces of legislation were identified as impacting higher education. The following is a short summary of bills with greatest impact:

*[HB 45, Veterans Education Amendments](#) by Rep. Paul Ray eliminates inequities institutions face in awarding in-state tuition to only those discharged under Chapters 30 and 33 of the GI bill and eliminated the five-year limit since discharge for in-state tuition eligibility of immediate family members who use GI bill benefits. The bill also allows veterans using the Veterans Tuition Gap Program administered by the Board of Regents to receive funds for fees and books, along with tuition. This item is designed to help spend surplus funds appropriated for the program. **The bill received unanimous support in both the Senate and House and awaits the Governor's signature.**

*[HB 103, Utah Promise Scholarship Program Amendments](#) by Rep. Derrin Owen makes technical changes to the Utah Promise Scholarship based on feedback from financial aid directors. This corrects an unintended error in ensuring all other state aid be exhausted before tapping funds appropriated to this program, including waivers. The change puts needed flexibility in the use of waivers, with some controls, before state dollars are tapped under this scholarship. **The bill has passed both House and Senate unanimously and awaits the Governor's signature.**

[HB 132 \(1st Sub.\), Higher Education Student Speech Rights](#) by Rep. Kim Coleman establishes a specific threshold that determines when student-on-student speech becomes harassment. After several years of opposing this legislation, USHE was able to work with the sponsor on substitute language that satisfies USHE institutions' biggest concerns. **The bill failed in the Senate.**

*[HB 256, Student Aid Amendments](#) by Rep. Karen Kwan requires student applicants to complete the Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA) to be eligible for certain financial aid for higher education. This modifies the application process, clarifies the qualifications for student financial aid, provided by scholarship or through the state, as well as determines where the financial aid may be applied with schools recognized by USBE, USHE, and UTECH. **This bill passed both the House and Senate and is awaiting the signature of the Governor.**

*[HB 336, Concurrent Enrollment Certificate Pilot Program](#) by Rep. Val Peterson creates the PRIME pilot program to expand access to concurrent enrollment and technical education in K-12. The legislation creates a three-tiered program that includes the LAUNCH certificate, DISCOVER breadth certificate, and TRANSFORM general education/technical certificate. **The bill has passed both House and Senate unanimously and awaits the Governor's signature.**

[HB 409, Concurrent Enrollment Amendments](#) by Rep. Eric Hutchings requires the USHE Board of Regents to annually approve a prioritized list of upper division Concurrent Enrollment courses and amends the formula for increasing funding for Concurrent Enrollment. **This bill passed both the House and Senate and is awaiting the signature of the Governor.**

***[SB 80 \(1st Sub.\), Campus Safety Amendments](#)** by Sen. Jani Iwamoto requires the USHE Board of Regents to study and make recommendations for providing public safety services on college and university campuses. This includes determining the relationship between public and campus law enforcement, the process of reporting, disciplinary actions and the potential for additional training. The study will take place during the interim and will require the USHE Board of Regents to present a final report of the study with recommendations to the Education Interim Committee and the Law Enforcement and Criminal Justice Interim Committee. **The bill received unanimous support in both the Senate and House and awaits the Governor's signature.**

***[SB 96, Emerging Technology Talent Initiative](#)** by Sen. Ann Millner creates an initiative that awards proposals submitted to an advisory board under the direction of the USHE Board of Regents that expands programs in deep technology (e.g. artificial intelligence, quantum computing, robotics, advanced materials, robotics, secure computing). **This bill passed both the House and Senate and is awaiting the signature of the Governor.**

***[SB 111 \(1st Sub.\), Higher Education Amendments](#)** by Sen. Ann Millner is legislation that significantly revamps the governance structure of higher education in Utah. The bill's primary components include:

- Merges the two current systems of higher education into a single system
- Establishes a single governing board, its initial composition and process for appointing future members
- Defines the new board's duties (selection of institutions presidents, requirements related to an institution's authority to establish new programs, etc.)
- Mandates certain transition-related actions of the USHE Board of Regents and the Utah System of Technical Colleges Board of Trustees
- Extends the term of the Higher Education Strategic Planning Commission by one year

A [press conference](#) of the bill's introduction was held on February 11. Here is a [summary of the legislation](#). **This bill passed both the House and Senate and is awaiting the signature of the Governor.** Transition plans are in the works and immediate action is expected by both governing boards soon after the legislative session.

HB355, Standards and Graduation Requirements Amendments by Rep. Karianne Lisonbee would have allowed the State Board of Education to change graduation requirements for high school students. Originally, the bill included math, science, and language arts. It was later amended to only include the language arts piece. **The bill failed to pass the House.**

SB 117, Higher Education Financial Aid Amendments by Sen. Daniel Hemmert allows the Regents' Scholarship to be used at private, nonprofit colleges or universities within the state (BYU, LDS Business College, Western Governors University, Westminster College). The bill appropriates an additional \$5 million towards the Regents' Scholarship as well as places limits on the amount of scholarship funding available to non-public institutions. **This bill passed both the House and Senate and is awaiting the signature of the Governor.**

** State Board of Regents took an official position in support*