UTAH SYSTEM OF HIGHER EDUCATION

MEMORANDUM

May 18, 2023

Student Affairs Committee Report

The following is a summary of the April 13, 2023, Student Affairs Committee meeting. In accordance with the theme of workforce alignment, the committee heard about how USHE institutions, the Commissioner's Office, and external partners are assisting prospective college students with career exploration and workforce experience. The second half of the meeting focused on exploring how institutional and community resources help current college students navigate the journey into their careers.

Assisting prospective college students

Talent Ready Utah: The meeting began with a presentation about Talent Ready Utah's K-12 Initiatives. Vic Hockett, associate commissioner of Talent Ready Utah, informed the Board about Talent Ready Utah's history as a vehicle for engaging industry, education, and other stakeholders to enhance workforce education and training collaboratively. This work is designed to fortify the talent pipeline needed to support the growth of four and five-star occupations in the state. Talent Ready Utah Program Manager of K-12 Initiatives Rachelle Ackley detailed some opportunities they offer secondary students, including work-based learning partnerships in the following industries: aerospace, life sciences, diesel technology, aviation, technology sales, and construction and building trades. A combined 1,700+ students have participated in these pathways since their creation and have gained valuable industry knowledge and skills as a result. Talent Ready Utah also manages the Utah Adopt-a-School program, a matching platform for connecting businesses to secondary schools to increase access to opportunity and economic empowerment. To help sustain Talent Ready Utah's work, in 2023, the legislature allocated $3 million in ongoing appropriations and $5 million in one-time funding to increase computer science offerings and grow the number of licensed educators in computer science.

Utah State Board of Education School Counseling Program Model: The Committee also heard from Michelle Glaittli, a school counseling program specialist with the Utah State Board of Education. Michelle detailed USBE's School Counseling Program Model, which requires that high school counselors spend 45-55% of their time providing direct services school-wide and at the individual level to help coach students and families through options for life after high school. One stipulation of this model requires that counselors provide all students with at least one group College and Career Readiness (CCR) meeting and one individual CCR meeting on a two-year rotation (in 7th and 8th grades, 9th and 10th grades, and 11th and

12th grades). During individual CCR meetings, families engage the parents or guardians of the student in the college and career exploration and preparation process. CCR meetings focus holistically on all institution types (which they refer to as "1, 2, 4 or more years") and address topics including college affordability, postsecondary exploration using tools like Keys to Success, postsecondary admissions process, and CTE pathways information.

Pathways: USHE Associate Commissioner for Strategic Initiatives Taylor Adams presented her and her team's work around pathways. Associate Commissioner Adams helped clarify pathways' important role: "educational programming developed to create seamless transition opportunities from high school to higher education to enhance student success, access, completion, and career readiness." Phase one of the pathways initiative, which involved foundation-building, information-gathering, and the deployment of regional pathways coordinators, is nearly complete. The second phase of the USHE pathways project began in April 2023 and is focused on establishing inter-institutional and cross-agency connections between USHE institutions, public education, governmental organizations, and the community. This phase will also involve convening a USHE Pathways Working Group that will define pathways, develop a shared mission, vision, and goals for public education pathways, identify and mitigate barriers and challenges in pathways work, align college-in-high school opportunities in both technical and academic education, create assessment tools to evaluate pathways in a data-informed way, and create an action plan for statewide release.

Assisting current college students

Campus-based career advising: Representatives from technical and degree-granting institutions spoke about campus services for helping students prepare for their transition into the workforce. From Southwest Technical College, Vice President for Student Services James Mullenaux and Director of Student Affairs Cyndie Tracie highlighted their Navigation Center, which offers students career advising, resume assistance, interview coaching, and job search assistance. Faculty also play a critical role in helping students transition into their careers by maintaining industry contacts and providing students with individual guidance and job leads. As a result of this holistic approach, Southwest Tech's FY22 career placement rate was 83%. From the Salt Lake Community College Career Services Office, Associate Director for Employer Engagement and Internships Devon Darland described the services their office offers students throughout their time at SLCC, including classroom presentations, employer connections and engagement, career coaching, free professional attire for students in need, and more.

Affinity networks for underserved students: Hannah Filizola Ruiz, a senior at Utah Valley University and a grassroots leadership organizer at United Way of Salt Lake, presented her qualitative research on the importance of affinity networks for underserved Latine students. Through interviews and photovoice projects, Hannah engaged with ten students to explore the question, "How does engagement with Latine affinity groups impact student feelings of belonging on predominantly white university campuses?" Findings revealed that affinity groups help distribute resources to the students they serve,

including career opportunities and career readiness assistance. Findings also reveal that affinity groups provide students with liberation so they can "feel seen, understood, and welcome on campus." Hannah's research also revealed that affinity groups enhance relationality and help students build important and trusting interpersonal relationships, providing underrepresented students with a support system of faculty, staff, and other students. Hannah emphasized that, as students prepare to leave college and enter the workforce, these relationships help smooth the transition, provide them with access to career opportunities and professional networks, and help them develop cultural competency.

Workforce outcomes for USHE students: USHE Chief Economist Carrie Mayne demonstrated multiple tools the committee could use to track USHE students' career outcomes. First, the USHE Attainment Dashboard has a feature that outlines workforce alignment. This tool allows users to assess the alignment of degrees and certificates to workforce needs. Second, USHE's Workforce Outcomes dashboard provides information about USHE students' earnings based on the industry of employment. Finally, the Census Bureau's Postsecondary Outcomes project provides national data on employment and earnings outcomes for US college and university graduates by degree level, major, and institution.

Commissioner's Recommendation

This is an information item only; no action is required