



2023-24 Annual Report



UTAH SYSTEM OF
HIGHER EDUCATION

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Our Vision

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

Our Mission

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

Utah Board of Higher Education Members



Amanda Covington
Chair



Steve Neeleman
Vice Chair



Javier Chavez Jr.



Jon Cox



Sharon Eubank



Danny Ipson



Tina Marriott



Aaron Skonnard



Cydni Tetro



Muskan Walia
Student Representative



Geoffrey Landward
Commissioner

Former Student Representative
Rachel Prickett Passey

Chair's Message

The Board of Higher Education is pleased to share the 2023–24 annual report, highlighting the progress the Utah System of Higher Education has made over the past year and the pivotal role higher education plays in shaping Utah's future. We have made significant strides in sharing the profound personal, societal, and economic value of earning a certificate or degree at any of our 16 colleges and universities. We look forward to further advancing higher education for Utahns to enhance their quality of life, increase earnings, expand job opportunities, improve health outcomes, and strengthen our communities.

We are proud of the advancements the Commissioner's office and institutions have made through systemwide alignment to promote and improve higher education across the state. Our Board remains steadfast in implementing its strategic plan, focusing on key areas of access, completion, financial value, and economic development.

These accomplishments would not have been possible without the dedication of our institutional leaders, faculty, and students and the invaluable support from state leaders, employers, and community partners. Together, we are working toward a future where every Utahn can benefit from the transformative power of higher education.

We will continue to serve the people of Utah, foster innovation, and prepare our students for success in an ever-evolving world. Together, we can create a future where every student in Utah has the opportunity to thrive and achieve their academic and professional goals.

Thank you,

Amanda Covington
Chair, Utah Board of Higher Education

Commissioner's Message

In the past year, the Utah System of Higher Education has faced both notable challenges and exciting opportunities, prompting our Board and institutions to adapt and innovate.

Among the changes, the Board significantly revised how it reviews and approves institutional tuition and fee increases, resulting in reduced increases systemwide. Additionally, the Board overhauled the System's budgeting process by eliminating individual institution requests for appropriations (RFAs). Instead, institutions' budget needs are now prioritized using the Board's strategic goals and incorporated into a unified system budget request. This change will reduce how much the System seeks in new funding while ensuring all requests align with strategic priorities.

At the institutional level, the most significant changes stemmed from H.B. 261, Equal Opportunity Initiatives, passed in the 2024 legislative session. Utah's public colleges and universities have implemented restructuring measures with a focus on promoting equal opportunity and academic excellence for all students. I want to thank our education partners, institutions, faculty, and staff for their commitment to navigating these transitions. Your efforts have ensured that our institutions continue to thrive and serve our students effectively.

Continued

This year, to better support the work of the Utah Board of Higher Education, we have also reorganized internally at the Office of the Commissioner. Our office now operates more efficiently, with resources realigned to reflect the Board's strategic priorities, particularly in economic development and student access. We also established a new Compliance Unit to help the Board meet its oversight and regulatory responsibilities.

As part of this unit, I created two positions: Compliance Director and Compliance Manager. These roles will be key to executing the legislative mandates and will report directly to our General Counsel and Board Secretary, Alison Adams. With the recent appointment of our new Deputy Commissioner, I am confident these changes will further strengthen our office, allowing us to meet the needs of our campuses, communities, and the state while advancing the Board's strategic priorities.

As we move forward, I encourage each of you to actively engage with System initiatives. Your insights and participation are essential to our success.

Geoffrey Landward
Commissioner of Higher Education

Leadership Appointments

Commissioner of Higher Education

Geoffrey Landward was appointed as the Commissioner of Higher Education for the Utah System of Higher Education in March 2024. His appointment was confirmed by Governor Spencer Cox and the Utah Senate, following a search process aimed at selecting a trusted leader who could advance the Utah System of Higher Education and collaborate effectively with the Board of Higher Education, institutional leaders, and statewide partners to ensure the System's continued success.

Deputy Commissioner of Higher Education

Angie Stallings was appointed as the Deputy Commissioner of Higher Education in September 2024, bringing with her extensive experience in education policy and law. In the position, she will use her considerable leadership and operational experience to help guide and direct the day-to-day activities of the Office of the Commissioner of Higher Education.

President of Salt Lake Community College

Gregory F. Peterson was selected President of Salt Lake Community College, effective July 1, 2024, after a nationwide search conducted by the Board. Dr. Peterson brings a strong commitment to fostering student success and workforce development, which is essential to Salt Lake Community College's mission to support students in educational pathways leading to successful transfer and meaningful employment.

A Year of Accomplishments

Strategic Plan

The Utah Board of Higher Education established a new vision and mission for higher education and formally adopted its [2024-27 Strategic Plan](#) in August 2024, marking a significant milestone in the state's ongoing efforts to enhance the quality and accessibility of higher education. This plan sets a clear path for advancing the Board's systemwide goals, focusing on priorities that are essential to the Board, institutions, state leaders, and students and their families: access, completion, financial value, and economic development.

A cornerstone of the new plan is its emphasis on collaboration between higher education institutions, industry partners, and state agencies. By fostering these partnerships, the Board aims to ensure that Utah's higher education system is not only responsive to the current needs of students and the workforce but also proactive in addressing future challenges and capitalizing on future opportunities. The plan includes initiatives to strengthen educational pathways, enhance workforce readiness, and promote research and innovation that will drive economic growth and collective well-being across the state.

This strategic plan is the result of extensive efforts by the Board's Strategic Plan Task Force, which worked closely with institutional leaders to incorporate feedback from the full Board and institutional presidents. Their work has ensured that the plan is aligned with both institutional priorities and the broader needs of the state.

Over the next four years, the Office of the Commissioner will oversee the implementation of specific tactics under each priority, ensuring that the strategic plan remains nimble and responsive to student, state, and institutional needs. Recognizing the dynamic nature of higher education, the plan is designed to be flexible and adaptable, allowing for adjustments over time to meet evolving needs and challenges.

To track progress and monitor the implementation and success of the new plan, a new [Board Priorities Dashboard](#) was created to provide real-time updates and performance [metrics on key strategic priorities](#).

Research and Analytics

USHE is advancing its systemwide data governance and collection efforts to enhance decision-making and performance monitoring. A central component of this effort includes the creation of the [Key Student Indicators dashboard](#), which provides detailed insights into student enrollment, retention, and awards across institutions. This tool allows the Board and other key education stakeholders to analyze trends in critical areas to improve educational outcomes systemwide.

In addition, this year, the Board authorized the Office of the Commissioner to enter into a contract with the Kem C. Gardner Policy Institute over the next six years to conduct research and provide reports on the value of higher education, including, but not limited to, the economic contributions of USHE institutions, budget stress testing, affordability, and return on investment. This partnership aims to provide valuable insights that will guide strategic planning and policy decisions.

The [Utah Data Research Center](#), housed within the Commissioner's office, is a statewide longitudinal database housing historical data from USHE, the Department of Workforce Services, the Utah State Board of Education, the Department of Commerce, and the Department of Health and Human Services. Data are linked using a sophisticated matching algorithm and used to conduct robust analyses to support the examination of policy and programs.

In the last year, UDRC fully operationalized the researcher database and expanded data sources within the UDRC data warehouse. UDRC also integrated a new data source into its database—the Ages and Stages Questionnaire (ASQ) data that was requested by the Governor's Early Childhood Commission—to inform research and policymaking in the early childhood education realm.

Looking ahead, UDRC is embarking on the expansion of capabilities to include the handling of transactional data through its BRIDGE project, thanks to the Department of Education's State Longitudinal Data System (SLDS 2023) grant program. The SLDS grant allocates \$3M of support from October 2023 to September 2027 to accomplish this goal. UDRC aims to establish the BRIDGE as the state of Utah's central location for the fulfillment of transactional data requests, with the purpose of decreasing the transactional cost (time and money) during liminal moments for Utah citizens.

The data team further published studies on [USHE graduate earnings](#), [USHE graduate students](#), [the advantages of completing college acceleration courses in high school](#), [completions of HB 144-eligible students](#), and [stacking general education awards](#).

The data team and Commissioner's office also partnered with external agencies to conduct the Utah Community College Study: [Enrollment Trends](#) and [Community College Services in Utah](#) and a [Prosperity 2023](#) report.

Innovative Initiatives

Admit Utah

Following the Board’s decision to eliminate admission application fees at all 16 USHE institutions, the Admissions Taskforce worked to further remove barriers for Utah high school students applying to college.

In collaboration with the Office of the Commissioner and institutional staff, the Admissions Task Force made significant strides in developing USHE’s first simplified and guaranteed admissions platform, Admit Utah. Developed to enhance accessibility and streamline the college admissions process, Admit Utah aims to achieve three key goals: ensure every Utah high school student is informed of their admission to at least one USHE institution, assist undecided students in exploring higher education options, and integrate college-going efforts into K-12 practices.

The initiative will officially launch in October 2024, with an online portal coinciding with Utah College Application Week, providing real-time admission notifications to students and facilitating their application process. In 2025, the Commissioner’s office staff will focus on integrating data with the Utah State Board of Education, enhancing the online portal, and planning outreach events for future college-bound students. This comprehensive effort is designed to simplify admissions, increase application rates, and support students throughout their college journey.



FAFSA Help

In July 2024, the Commissioner's office received a \$300,000 award from the Educational Credit Management Corporation (ECMC) to support its FAFSA Help Initiative, aimed at increasing FAFSA completions for the 2024-25 academic year. The funds were used to create self-guided FAFSA assistance webpages, launch social media ad campaigns, partner with Utah content creators, develop chatbot resources, and translate materials into Spanish.

Efforts to boost FAFSA completions included targeted outreach, with digital ads reaching 478,175 individuals, generating 1.7 million impressions and 11,984 clicks to FAFSA resources. Content creators, with a collective audience of 670,000, shared personal FAFSA success stories, resulting in strong engagement, including nearly 200,000 views on Instagram Reels. Earned media coverage further amplified the message, with stories appearing on three major Utah news outlets.

Despite initial challenges with the FAFSA application process, Utah saw a significant increase in FAFSA completions, closing the gap from a -6.9% deficit in May to -3.6% by the end of August, with an additional 1,796 completions compared to the same period last year.



\$\$ FOR COLLEGE



Utah College Advising Corps

In the 2023–24 academic year, UCAC advisers served 72 high schools, with a total of 60 advisers. They worked closely with over 25,000 high school students, helping to plan their postsecondary education pathways. Advisers supported the submission of more than 10,000 FAFSA applications, assisted with over 20,000 college applications, and engaged with over 8,000 parents to ensure students' success.

After the program's annual two-week training and college tour for advisers, each region conducted tours of their local technical colleges, fostering strong connections to expose students to technical education opportunities. Additionally, advisers organized student visits to all 16 USHE institutions for campus tours and information sessions, which allowed students to make informed decisions about their postsecondary plans.

UCAC also established a pivotal partnership with the new AmeriCorps service program, One Utah Service Fellowships. Through this collaboration, advisers for the 2024–25 academic year are now enrolled in the state's AmeriCorps program. This strategic move not only cuts program costs by over 30% in salaries and benefits, but it also offers advisers the opportunity to continue earning an education award upon completing their employment term.

To further evaluate the impact of UCAC's efforts, the Commissioner's office is currently conducting both qualitative and quantitative analysis to determine immediate and long-term program efficacy.

Academic and Technical Education

Bachelor of Applied Studies

The Utah Board of Higher Education created a new degree category in policy, a Bachelor of Applied Studies (BAP), that would have a minimum of 90 required credits, which is shorter than the current standard of 120 credits required for typical four-year bachelor's degrees. The Board also approved a lower credit minimum for the existing category of Bachelor of Applied Science (BAS) degrees.

The policy changes pave the way for Utah System of Higher Education degree-granting institutions to explore new, innovative bachelor programs that could provide students with faster pathways into careers and an opportunity to graduate up to a year sooner.

Accrediting bodies are currently allowing a handful of shortened bachelor's degree pilots before authorizing them on a broad scale. In anticipation of that authorization, USHE institutions are performing market analyses and developing plans for new, shorter BAP and BAS programs, which they will present to the Board in 2025. The areas of study for the new degrees will initially be limited in number and tied to specific industry needs to allow institutions and the Board to assess their impact and value. USHE may be the first system in the country to create the possibility of these degrees in policy.



Introductory Course Success

USHE data show that students who fail even one course have 20% lower graduation rates than students who have not failed. The Introductory Course Success initiative was adopted to address key 'gateway' General Education courses that have the highest enrollments and highest failure rate in order to help as many students pass as possible. Key initiatives include providing students with multiple options to get into and fulfill introductory course requirements. These efforts have led to a 2% increase in pass rates in targeted gateway courses since the adoption of the Board's strategic plan in 2020.

Faculty

Through Faculty Major Committees and the General Education Task Force's area working groups, faculty have been collaborating to establish multiple alternative placement measures into key college-level courses and to develop pedagogical strategies, inclusive curricula, and supplemental instruction to support student learning and successful course completion without hurting academic rigor.

General Education

The systemwide General Education Task Force collaborated to streamline and standardize General Education requirements across USHE institutions through a massive overhaul of [Policy R470](#), which the Board of Higher Education approved in December 2023. The updates eliminate the 9–12 credit discrepancy in General Education requirements at different institutions, eliminating almost a full semester of additional requirements in some cases.

Other efforts included a significant redesign of "math pathways" and the options for completing the General Education quantitative literacy requirement through options for quantitative reasoning, statistics, and college algebra/calculus suitable to particular disciplines and career pathways, with more inclusive placement measures, co-requisite remediation opportunities, and enhanced tutoring.

Concurrent Enrollment

As another key tool in the Introductory Course Success Initiative, Concurrent Enrollment allows advanced high school students the opportunity to enroll in college courses for only \$5 per credit, saving them time and money on their way to graduation. CE courses are carefully selected to help students meet General Education or Career and Technical Education requirements. Credits earned through CE transfer to any USHE degree-granting institution.

During the 2022–23 year, 174 public, charter, and alternative high schools participated in the CE program. Students from 41 districts and 40 charter schools earned concurrent credit, saving an estimated \$86.5 million in tuition costs.

Efforts to help students complete their Quantitative Literacy requirements through CE have a particularly significant impact. The Board has used legislatively funded pass-through grants to institutions to increase the number of high school teachers qualified to teach Concurrent Enrollment QL courses, increased the number of sections of QL offered through CE, provided more math pathways options in the high schools, and worked to identify and recruit students who have not self-selected to enroll in CE math. In the 2023 academic year, high school students successfully completed 41,734 credit hours of QL requirements, a 3% increase from the previous year.

Credit for Prior Learning

National research demonstrates a strong correlation between students receiving credit for prior learning (CPL) and their likelihood of completing a degree. A national study of more than 230,000 adult students at 72 colleges and universities revealed that 49% of students who received credit for prior learning completed a degree or certificate compared to only 27% of their peers. Studies by the Council on Adult and Experiential Learning and the Western Interstate Commission on Higher Education found that credit for prior learning was especially significant for adult students, and adults comprise close to 30% of USHE's student body. USHE's CPL initiative allows students to receive academic credit for learning acquired outside of traditional college environments, including advanced coursework in high school, employer training, and military service.

The Board has standardized the credit students earn in commonly-numbered courses across the System, which allows students to meaningfully apply CPL to fulfill specific general education, major, and graduation requirements rather than just accumulating numbers of credits. Through this initiative, 34,568 students earned 232,943 college credits in the 2022-23 academic year, resulting in an estimated \$56.3 million savings in tuition and fees. While most credits were earned through national standardized exams like AP, CLEP, and IB, 13% of credits came from diverse methods such as military service, certifications, and institutional challenge exams, demonstrating the broad impact of the program. Future efforts will include a communication push to make students more aware of the possibility of earning CPL and an expansion of efforts to recognize work-based learning.

Technical Education Program Alignment

USHE has made significant progress on the Technical Education Program Alignment initiative, driven by [Utah Code 53B-16-105\(5\)](#), which mandates standardization of technical programs across the state. This effort, part of the Board's strategic plan, ensures systemwide consistency in technical education.

The initiative aims to standardize graduates' skills across institutions, simplify program structures, and promote collaboration among colleges to better meet industry needs. It also seeks to reduce duplication, cut costs, and shorten completion times by expanding statewide articulation agreements, allowing easier transfers for students.

Over 250 faculty members are actively involved with the initiative, with 96% of the 86 anticipated aligned program proposals accepted. While some institutions are further along in implementation, others are in earlier stages. Policies to formalize alignment are being developed, and a new website will provide accessible information. Efforts to strengthen articulation agreements with both secondary and degree-granting institutions are also underway.

This initiative strengthens Utah's technical education system, benefiting students, employers, and the broader community by enhancing the consistency and value of credentials statewide.

Technical Education Transition to Credit

Following the 2020 merger of Utah's technical and higher education systems, technical colleges gained the ability to offer semester credits, replacing the previous clock-hour course measurement model. This shift prompted the formation of a task force to evaluate the advantages of transitioning to a credit-based model, which would better align with traditional academic institutions and improve student outcomes.

The task force found that clock-hour programs face stricter federal regulations, limiting flexibility for students, particularly adult learners and those receiving financial aid. They recommended moving to a credit system to increase flexibility, a move unanimously supported by the Utah Board of Higher Education.

With this in mind, the transition to credit hours aims to standardize technical colleges with other institutions, remove restrictive attendance requirements, and maintain the flexibility of competency-based education, allowing students to learn at their own pace.

The transition began in July 2023, with adjustments to tuition, fees, and scheduling occurring after receiving approval from the accrediting body and the Department of Education. New students are enrolling in credit-based programs, while clock-hour programs are being phased out. Full implementation is expected by FY 2025. The focus is on improving student access without altering the role of technical colleges.

Financial Stewardship

Scholarships

17,000 Students

The Board of Higher Education awarded or allocated scholarship funds to institutions to support nearly 17,000 students in FY 2023. Over 70% of all scholarships awarded were needs-based or industry-specific scholarships.

Nearly \$4M

Close to 3,700 students were awarded the Opportunity Scholarship in FY 2023, encouraging high school students to prepare academically for college by taking advanced courses in high school. Over \$900,000 was awarded to students enrolled in technical education programs that prepare graduates for a high-demand, high-wage career. Additionally, approximately \$4 million was awarded to over 3,100 Utah students who had financial need through the Utah Promise Program.

New Aid

The Board of Higher Education also made awards starting in the fall of 2023 for three new state aid programs.

Applications were collected to make inaugural awards for:

- PRIME Scholarship
- Karen Mayne Public Safety Officer Scholarship
- First Responder Mental Health Services Grant

Student Success Endowment

The Utah Legislature established the Higher Education Student Success Endowment during the 2022 legislative session. Managed by the State Treasurer, the fund's proceeds are designated to support USHE priorities and aid students enrolled at USHE institutions.

In June 2024, the Utah Board of Higher Education approved a FY 2025 spending policy for the endowment, directing the Commissioner's office to allocate funds to USHE institutions. Specifically, the Board instructed the Commissioner to provide financial aid to students who were unable to complete a FAFSA due to limitations in the revised 2024-25 federal form, ensuring support for those who would have otherwise qualified for federal aid. The Board unanimously supported deploying FY 2025 Endowment funding as a one-year "contingency bridge" prior to establishing a permanent spending policy for FY 2026 and beyond.

As of September 24, 2024, USHE institutions had made 287 awards to students who were unable to complete a 2024-25 FAFSA, demonstrated financial need through completion of the Federal Aid Estimator, and who otherwise would have qualified for federal financial aid. USHE institutions disbursed over \$300,000 in endowment funds to assist these students during the fall 2024 semester, with an estimated \$650,000 to be awarded to students by the end of FY 2025.

Additionally, the Board approved the use of excess endowment funds to supplement four other established state aid programs after institutions had addressed the financial needs of students who could not complete a FAFSA. These existing state aid programs are intended to provide financial assistance to students who demonstrate financial need, are pursuing approved degrees that lead to high-wage and high-demand jobs, or engage in community service.



Budget Process

The Board significantly rebuilt its operating budget review process, approving new guidelines for FY 2025–26, which notably includes a combined submission for Requests for Appropriations (RFAs) from all USHE institutions and external sources that are scored and ranked by the Office of the Commissioner based on alignment with system-level strategic priorities and other factors as determined by the Board. The combined request avoids individual institutional requests and is meant to capture new funding requests as they align with five statutory categories: employee compensation, mandatory cost increases, performance funding, enrollment growth, and other system-level and institutional priorities.

The Board aims to minimize or avoid tuition and fee increases while ensuring budget requests are justifiable given the state’s revenue outlook. Approved requests will be included in the Board’s final budget proposal to the Utah Legislature moving forward.

Capital Facilities Process

The Utah Board of Higher Education also refined its capital facilities request process, approving new guidelines for FY 2025–26 to ensure compliance with statutory requirements. Institutions must assess their capital needs and obtain board approval before submitting project requests, which will be evaluated based on a scoring rubric that considers cost-effectiveness and efficient use of resources, alignment with institutional roles, and system-level strategic priorities. Each institution can submit one non-dedicated project request, while dedicated projects can also be funded through specific appropriations. The guidelines emphasize the importance of using available resources efficiently and addressing critical facility needs within the framework of strategic planning and development.

Board Approved Buildings

- Pathway Building, Ogden–Weber Technical College
- Social Science Classroom & Lab Building, Snow College

Groundbreakings

- John and Marcia Price Computing and Engineering Building; James LeVoy Sorenson Center for Medical Innovation; First America Ballpark; Camp Williams U.S. Army Reserve facility, University of Utah
- Veterinary Medical Education Building; Monument Valley Education Building, Utah State University
- Joe and Beverly Burgess Family Business Center; Music Center, Southern Utah University
- Scott M. Smith Engineering Building; Soccer stadium, Utah Valley University
- General Classroom Building, Utah Tech University
- Payson Campus; Heber Valley Campus, Mountainland Technical College

Economic Development

Talent Ready Utah

In the last year, [Talent Ready Utah](#), housed within the Office of the Commissioner of Higher Education, made significant strides in advancing its initiatives in Deep Technology, Life Sciences Workforce, Computer Sciences, Aerospace, Advanced Manufacturing, and Health Professions by enhancing work-based learning opportunities for students through partnerships with local employers, industry leaders, the public education system, and institutions of higher education. Talent Ready Utah initiatives focus on preparing Utah's students for high-demand careers by offering internships, apprenticeships, hands-on learning experiences, certificates, and all levels of degrees that are aligned with industry needs. These programs, executed by USHE institutions, provide students with industry-relevant skills and real-world experiences and bridge the gap between education and employment while contributing to Utah's economic growth.

In collaboration with USHE institutions, 110 active programs across the state are funded through Talent Ready Utah initiatives, and thanks to the Utah Legislature, over \$21,000,000 of funding was utilized for these targeted workforce development efforts.

To track the initiative impacts, a [Talent Ready Utah dashboard](#) was created, which details student enrollment, completion and employment metrics, funding, and training hours provided.

Talent Ready has worked to strengthen its engagement with local communities and industry partners, fostering collaboration that supports both educational institutions and the workforce. By working closely with stakeholders, including local employers, government agencies, and community organizations, Talent Ready has expanded access to education and career training, enhancing the role of USHE as a driving force for economic and social well-being in the state.

Innovation District

Significant progress has been made over the past year in advancing the **Innovation District at The Point**, a hub designed to advance technological innovation, foster a startup environment, and facilitate collaboration among universities, businesses, policymakers, and entrepreneurs to nurture new ideas from the research stage through to commercialization to solve Utah's unique challenges.

Key initiatives include Convergence Hall, the Nucleus Institute, USHE Shared Service: Commercialization, the Utah Innovation Fund, and the Utah Policy Innovation Lab, each contributing to Utah's growing innovation ecosystem.

Convergence Hall

Designed to be a central collaboration space for higher education institutions, businesses, and entrepreneurs at The Point, major progress has been made in the development of Convergence Hall. Shaped by insights from over 100 stakeholders across industry, government, and education, this dynamic space will feature office spaces, co-working areas, and incubators. The space will also serve as an educational hub with a STEM makerspace and interactive museum to inspire K-12 and higher education students. The hall is set to play a key role in driving technological innovation and supporting startups in Utah.

Nucleus Institute

The Nucleus Institute, in partnership with Talent Ready Utah, is centered on advancing workforce and policy innovation. It aims to ensure that students are prepared to meet the demands of rapidly evolving sectors through strategic partnerships with educational institutions and industry leaders. A key focus is on aligning students with industry-facing projects early in their education to gain hands-on experience addressing everyday challenges. Additionally, the institute collaborates with government and industry to promote policies that foster entrepreneurship and facilitate the application of innovative ideas from research to practice.

Recently, the Nucleus Institute launched centrally coordinated, innovation-related internship programs, offering USHE students opportunities at the Utah Innovation Fund, Utah Policy Innovation Lab, and with various private corporation research arms.

Together, these efforts strengthen Utah's position as a leader in innovation, commercialization, and workforce development, driving economic growth and preparing students for future success.

USHE Shared Services

As part of its efforts to enhance innovation and commercialization across USHE, the Board approved commercialization as a shared service. The Lab will serve as a 'back office' for innovation and commercialization endeavors at USHE institutions to provide

access to grant funding, technology transfer services, start-up formation, and investment scaling. By connecting institutions and leveraging collective expertise, these efforts will streamline processes and create stronger pathways for innovation statewide. Additionally, regular collaboration with technology transfer offices across the state will help align commercialization goals, share best practices, and ensure that Utah's colleges and universities are well-positioned to maximize innovation and drive economic growth.

Utah Innovation Fund

The state-backed venture capital Utah Innovation Fund has awarded \$2.25 million to Utah-based startups, supporting the commercialization of research from Utah higher education institutions. Companies including Eden Technologies, BIOS, 3Helix, Rebel Medicine, Inherent Biosciences, Authentiface, Buster, Stratus, Purgo Scientific, and Paterna Biosciences have benefited from this investment. The fund's operations will later be based at the Innovation District at The Point, with student involvement through a hands-on Due Diligence Team, which has engaged 40 students so far to work on real due diligence investment analysis. Additionally, a PhD Advisory Group was created to support students through mentorship, access to resources, and strategic guidance, to prepare them for impactful careers after graduation.

Utah Policy Innovation Lab

The Utah Policy Innovation Lab has played a pivotal role in facilitating collaboration among industry, government, and academia to address complex policy challenges in Utah. It has helped support policy efforts in energy, AI, data privacy, and others. The Lab works closely with industry to identify and reduce regulatory burdens, fostering a more business-friendly environment. Moving forward, the Lab is committed to supporting regulatory changes across various sectors to help solve Utah's unique challenges, ensuring the state remains at the forefront of innovation and policy alignment with national and global impact.





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