



UTAH SYSTEM OF  
HIGHER EDUCATION

# MEMORANDUM

May 12, 2023

## Policy 312, *Institutional Roles and Missions*

The Utah Board of Higher Education is responsible for establishing, approving, and overseeing each institution's mission and role in accordance with [Utah Code § 53B-1-402](#) and [53B-16-101](#). The Board uses Policy 312, *Utah System of Higher Education and Institutional Missions and Roles*, to define each of the institution types represented in statute. The Board needs to update the policy to include the distinct roles of technical colleges and to clarify the roles of degree-granting institutions, within the parameters outlined in the Utah Code.

Utah Code defines the following institutional roles and designations:

- **Research Universities:** University of Utah; Utah State University
- **Regional Universities:** Weber State University; Southern Utah University; Utah Tech University; Utah Valley University
- **Community Colleges:** Salt Lake Community College; Snow College
- **Technical Colleges:** Bridgerland Technical College; Davis Technical College; Dixie Technical College; Mountainland Technical College; Ogden-Weber Technical College; Southwest Technical College; Tooele Technical College; Uintah Basin Technical College; Salt Lake Community College\*; Snow College\*; Utah State University Eastern, Blanding, Moab\*

*\*Degree-granting institutions that provide technical education*

Earlier this year, the Board designated a small task force comprised of Board Member Hope Eccles, Associate Commissioner Kim Ziebarth, and Associate Commissioner Julie Hartley to evaluate institutional roles and missions and make recommendations for necessary policy updates. In April, the task force presented its recommendations to the Academic Education and Technical Education Committees, which both voted to approve the recommendations and ask the Commissioner's Office to draft policy updates based upon the following:

- Policy R312 should establish these general principles for institutional roles: to focus on institutional excellence; ensure access for all types of students (traditional & nontraditional students, underserved, underrepresented, urban, rural, and adult students); avoid unwise duplication of programs, resources, and effort; promote quality, efficiency and accountability; meet the state's workforce needs; and benefit surrounding communities. The Board prioritizes the

value and quality of program offerings and the ability of institutions to fulfill their primary roles and missions.

- Recommended elements for the Technical College Role definition: Technical Colleges offer technical education programs leading to certificates and short-term occupational training; meet the needs of Utah's employers for technically skilled workers by providing market-driven technical education to secondary and adult students; prepare students to enter or advance in the workplace; offer technical education in high school and for adults; and contribute to economic development and improve the quality of life for Utah citizens. The Utah Code designates the following Technical Colleges: Bridgerland Technical College; Davis Technical College; Dixie Technical College; Mountainland Technical College; Ogden-Weber Technical College; Southwest Technical College; Tooele Technical College; Uintah Basin Technical College. Salt Lake Community College; Snow College; and Utah State University Eastern, Blanding, and Moab also fill a Technical College Role.
- Recommended elements for the Community College Role definition: Community Colleges offer academic certificates and associate degrees that lead directly to the workforce or that prepare students to transfer to baccalaureate programs; focus on lower division teaching and training (i.e., the freshman and sophomore years); open entry admissions for students; provide developmental education when needed to help students succeed; offer concurrent enrollment in high schools; provide community outreach and continuing education; contribute to the quality of life and economic development of the community and the region. The Utah Code designates Salt Lake Community College and Snow College as both Community Colleges and Technical Colleges.
- Recommended elements for the Regional University Role definition: Regional Universities are authorized by the Utah Code to offer academic certificates, associate degrees, bachelor's degrees, and select master's degrees to fulfill regional demand; they do not offer technical education, but may offer career and technical degrees that build upon certificates earned at technical colleges; fulfill a community college function in their region and provide open entry admissions for students, remedial education and special support services when needed to help students succeed; scholarly and creative activity supplement the teaching role; offer concurrent enrollment in high schools; provide community outreach and continuing education; contribute to the quality of life and economic development of the community, the region, and the state. The Utah Code designates Weber State, Utah Valley University, Southern Utah University, and Utah Tech University as Regional Universities. They also serve a Community College role in their regions.
- Recommended elements for the Research University Role definition: Research Universities discover, create, and impart knowledge through research, teaching, and service; provide academic programs of the highest quality and excellence at the undergraduate, graduate, and professional levels with a strong emphasis on research; contribute to quality of life and economic development

in Utah, the nation, and throughout the world. The Utah Code designates the University of Utah and Utah State University as the only Research Universities for the entire state. Utah State University also serves a Community College and Technical College role through its Eastern, Moab, and Blanding campuses.

- All Institutions are expected to maintain institutional accreditation through the appropriate accreditor for their role, recognized by the US Department of Education, and should maintain additional programmatic accreditation where appropriate.
- All Institutions engage their larger community by enhancing cultural, social, artistic and economic development within their communities. An Institution's mission and role influence the specific community outreach activities it promotes. Continuing education for professional or personal development is part of the Institutions' missions.
- The task force also recommends that institutional mission statements no longer be included in Policy R312 itself, but that they still undergo review and approval by the Board, including when they are updated.

The attached draft incorporates the recommendations from both committees and has been vetted with the Council of Presidents, Chief Instructional Officers of Technical Colleges, and Chief Academic Officers of Degree-granting Institutions. It is now ready for a determination from the Academic Education Committee to forward it to the full board for approval.

### **Commissioner's Recommendation**

The Commissioner recommends that the Committee review the attached draft of Policy R312 and forward it to the full board for approval.

### **Attachment**

Policy R312, Institutional Roles and Missions