

# Commissioner's Report

September 2006

Prepared for the State Board of Regents and the Utah System of Higher Education

As detailed in the Regents' General Consent Calendar, \$13.6 million in research grants have been awarded – \$6.75 million to the University of Utah and \$6.86 million to Utah State University – since the last Board meeting.

## University of Utah:

The David Eccles School of Business recently announced a \$13.25 million gift from Canadian philanthropist and David Eccles School alumnus Pierre Lassonde. The gift will create the largest entrepreneur center in the U.S. and represents one of the largest donations ever made to the University of Utah and the David Eccles School of Business by an individual donor.

## Utah State University:

A reception for 30 Dominican Republic students was held at the president's home in August. The students will earn master's degrees in policy administration from Utah State University in April as part of a collaborative partnership between USU and the Universidad Autonoma de Santo Domingo. The students are professionals in governmental agencies in their country. The program enhances the professional stature of public service. Courses have been taught by USU faculty members in the Dominican Republic.

## Weber State University:

In an effort to ease Utah's nursing shortage, Weber State University's Department of Nursing is offering an accelerated nursing program at the WSU Davis campus this year. The program is designed for people who already have a college degree, have met nursing prerequisites and need only nursing courses to become a registered nurse. Students will take more courses each semester, allowing them to save one semester's tuition and finish an RN program in one calendar year, rather than two school years. The program began this fall with 30 students and has been made possible through a donation from Intermountain Healthcare.

## Southern Utah University:

The Southern Utah University School of Business held a ribbon-cutting ceremony for a new Student Service and Investment Lab on September 8. The donation for the lab came from former business student Garrett Gunderson, who graduated in 2000. He named the lab after Economics and Finance professor Steven Harrop, who Gunderson said made a personal connection with him during his time as a student and played a key role in his personal success. The lab is used by MBA and investment students for managing their \$250,000 of "real money" portfolio in their program. It is also used by business students to provide free income tax assistance for low income families in the spring.

## Snow College:

Nearly 75 percent of Snow College's new students voluntarily registered for Start Smart, a freshmen orientation program. Start Smart gives students campus tours, introduces them to other freshmen, briefs students on Snow College policies and reduces first-day jitters.

### **College of Eastern Utah:**

The College of Eastern Utah SUN Involvement Center has compiled its statistical summary from last year's volunteer activities. The SUN Center volunteers participated in 66 major service projects during the school year. There were 20,381 hours of service donated by the students, faculty and staff during the '05-'06 school year. The 20,000 hours were generated by 1,057 volunteers. The total campus enrollment on the Price Campus was just under 2,000. The SUN involvement center is beginning its 11th year of operation under the direction of Kathy Murray

### **Dixie State College:**

Kristie Baron, assistant professor of nursing, is involved in a statewide simulation group currently developing simulations for computerized manikins used in nursing labs. Her simulation of a baby with bronchiolitis, a respiratory infection, is the first accepted for statewide distribution and will be used in a nursing research study.

### **Utah Valley State College:**

Utah Valley State College broke ground on September 6 for its new library. The new facility will be an iconic structure that will stand five stories and be approximately 190,000 square feet. The new library will dramatically improve the quality of library services to the campus and region as well as increase group/individual studying space for students. The new library will be completed by late spring 2008. Also, UVSC is pleased to announce Chris Taylor as its new AVP for Communication and Marketing. Taylor, an alum of UVSC, has been the director of public relations and publications at Dixie State College.

### **Salt Lake Community College:**

A state-of-the-arts Health Sciences Center is currently under construction at the Jordan Campus. This new Center will make it possible to locate all SLCC Allied Health and Nursing programs on one campus, providing easy access for students. This center will not only increase the number of health care professional graduates by a minimum of 360 each year, but also shorten the long waiting lists to enter health care programs.

### **Utah College of Applied Technology:**

The Ogden-Weber Campus (OWATC) of the Utah College of Applied Technology is partnering with Williams International to create a new Lean Manufacturing Training Center. Williams International is providing equipment valued at \$25 million to train students in lean manufacturing principles and advanced machining skills. The college is providing faculty, curriculum, and will coordinate instruction with all employers in Weber County. The equipment has already been delivered to its new home at the Business Depot in Ogden (BDO). The new facility will be operated by OWATC and will include classrooms and a realistic production environment. It should be operational by early spring 2007 and will be open to all employers in Northern Utah.

### **Utah Higher Education Assistance Authority:**

On August 14, 2006, UHEAA sponsored a training workshop for an important new source of financial aid: Academic Competitiveness Grants (ACG) and National Science and Mathematics Access to Retain Talent (SMART) Grants. These grants are designed to encourage students to take more challenging courses in high school—making success in college more likely, according to research, and to pursue college majors in high demand in the global economy such as science, mathematics, technology, engineering, and critical foreign languages. This school year, \$790 million is available nationwide to eligible students beginning July 1, 2006.

**Utah Educational Savings Plan:**

**UESP continues to grow due to favorable national press coverage and local outreach efforts. UESP now has more than \$1.6 billion in assets and nearly 79,000 accounts. The federal tax benefits of UESP, once set to expire at the end of 2010, were made permanent by Congress and President Bush on August 17, 2006. UESP created a postcard-size brochure and distributed 520,000 of them to students attending kindergarten through 12<sup>th</sup> grade in public, private, and charter schools. UESP is receiving about 75 requests per day for information in response to this effort. UESP also developed a tool kit for employers who would like to offer payroll deduction, and received notice that the logo is now a registered trademark.**