

Commissioner's Report

September 2007

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

As detailed in the Regents' General Consent Calendar, \$13.17 million in research grants have been awarded – \$2.96 million to the University of Utah and \$10.21 million to Utah State University – since the last Board meeting.

University of Utah:

Seventeen companies were launched from technologies developed at the University of Utah within the last year. The companies not only help move research forward through the licensing royalty revenue they bring in, but they provide jobs for the people of Utah and help to strengthen the economy in the state. The 17 companies are based on research in fields such as medicinal sciences, engineering, and fine arts.

Utah State University:

A new round of rankings marks the start of the academic year at Utah State University, including "Best in the West," "Best Value" and a No. 1 recognition by *U.S. News and World Report*. That ranking listed USU No. 1 among public universities for graduates with least debt. USU was included in the top 35 overall among public national universities based on social mobility, research and service (*The Washington Monthly*). *The Princeton Review* listed USU among "Best Western Colleges" and "America's Best Value College."

Weber State University:

On Aug. 29, students at the Northern Utah Academy for Math, Engineering & Sciences started attending classes on the Weber State University Davis campus. The new partnership allows students to attend high school and early college courses at one convenient location and benefit from easy access to university resources. In return, WSU sees the collaboration as an opportunity to work with and mentor students who are especially motivated to complete their college degrees.

Southern Utah University:

Southern Utah University will inaugurate its 15th president, Michael T. Benson, on Friday, September 21, 2007. The installation ceremony is the cornerstone of a week-long inauguration celebration that includes academic panels and a historical political debate, esteemed guest speakers at a leadership convocation, and a Goo Goo Dolls concert for both students and the community to enjoy as they gather together in support of SUU's newest leader.

Snow College:

At the conclusion of the 2006 commencement exercises, Student Body President Tony Frustaci initiated a conversation with Commencement speaker Pamela Atkinson which resulted in him offering nearly fifty new fleece blankets to her homeless shelter. The blankets were purchased by the students for all graduating sophomores.

College of Eastern Utah:

The College of Eastern Utah has established a fund for the descendents of the fallen miners in the Crandall Canyon Mine. The school has received approximately \$14,000 and anticipates additional funds will be donated during benefit softball tournament hosted by Carbon County Recreation.

These monies will augment the commitment CEU has made to waive the tuition for any dependent of a lost miner or any of the dependents of the rescue team who were killed in the rescue effort.

Dixie State College:

Students in the Dixie State College Dental Hygiene program have again scored in the top 5 percent in the nation on the National Board Exam. DSC dental hygiene students posted the fourth-highest pass rate on the 2007 exam. Overall, DSC's program has finished in the top six nationally, in six of the last eight years. In addition, DSC dental hygiene students also passed the Western Regional Examining Board clinical licensing exam. The program as a whole earned a 93.3 percent pass rate, with one student earning 99.88 percent.

Utah Valley State College:

In 2004, President Sederburg charged a task force to evaluate, benchmark and improve UVSC's policy set and policy management system to be commensurate with those of a regional state university. Outcomes of this three-year project are: 1) a recodification of the institution's policy set; 2) the deletion of redundant or obsolete policies; 3) the identification/creation of needed policies; 4) a reorganization of the policy approval process to improve transparency, employee involvement/collaboration and efficiency; and 5) the creation of The Online Policy System (TOPS), which includes a word/topic searchable function and a policy approval pipeline. The American Council on Education has invited UVSC to present its policy task force outcomes and best practices at its 2008 annual conference.

Salt Lake Community College:

The SLCC Health Sciences Center opened August 22, providing a state-of-the-art facility that will help Utah communities meet the growing demand for qualified health care professionals. More than 600 nursing students and more than 1,400 total students in health care fields are currently taking classes in the HSC. The 151,000 square-foot, multi-level building will provide students with cutting-edge equipment and facilities, including 16 classrooms, five computer labs, 28 medical labs, and five cadaver labs. The new HSC also provides a low-income primary care center, a student assessment center, and a radiology clinic that includes MRI, ultrasound, and mammography machines.

Utah College of Applied Technology:

UCAT's Salt Lake-Tooele Campus (SLTATC) has been working closely with area school districts to develop new partnership opportunities. This fall, the college will move one of its Pharmacy Technician programs to Granite School District's Granite Technical Institute. The college and Granite continue to offer a joint welding program that receives strong industry support. This fall, the college will begin offering Dental Assisting and Medical Assisting, including associated professional certifications, at the new Tooele County Health Clinic. The College is also working with Salt Lake School District to begin offering a new Medical Assisting program at Horizonte Instruction and Training Center.

Utah Higher Education Assistance Authority:

To provide a single point of reference for students with questions about Student Loan Repayment and as part of enhanced Default Prevention activities, UHEAA has created a new brochure entitled "Student Loan Repayment." The new brochure provides answers to the most common questions facing students as they leave school and enter loan repayment. Several institutions are using this brochure as part of an introduction to student loans for first-time borrowers.

Utah Educational Savings Plan:

UESP continues to grow due to favorable national press coverage and local outreach efforts. UESP now has more than 100,000 college savings accounts. Two new television commercials are airing; and more than 600,000 Back-To-School brochures are being distributed to every elementary, middle, and high school student in the state of Utah. UESP will have a booth at the Utah State Fair, September 6-16. The payroll deduction benefit offered to interested employers continues to increase. UESP also received national media attention with articles in both *Kiplinger's* and *Money* magazine touting UESP's low fees.