



## Utah Higher Education Budget “Hot Spots” February 5, 2009

### Guiding Principles for Budget Reductions

1. In today’s economy, education must be considered holistically. Treat Public Higher Education the same as Public K-12 Education.
2. Give institutions flexibility to manage their budgets (including Commissioner’s Office for statewide programs).
3. For future budget cuts, cut each institution by the same percentage, and backfill accordingly.

### Budget Priorities (Adopted by State Board of Regents, January 16, 2009)

As the Legislature grapples with a very difficult fiscal environment, we reiterate our priorities along with some practical considerations, given the state’s current situation.

1. **Employee compensation** remains our highest priority. We advocate treating higher education employees on a par with state and public education employees. Funding of at least health insurance premium increases is a top priority.
2. Just as the national government is looking to enact a stimulus package to boost our economy, we **support responsible bonding** by the state **for higher education and other state facilities**. In September the Board of Regents prioritized capital projects totaling \$295 million, to address both aging infrastructure and student enrollment growth.
3. **Continued commitment to funding building operations and maintenance (O&M)**, including those built with private donations that meet the criteria established by the State Building Board and Division of Facilities Construction and Management.
4. The **Regents’ Scholarship** initiative was launched in 2008 as a way of encouraging high school students to take more rigorous classes and better utilize their senior year. Early results are impressive. This was funded with \$900,000 including \$400,000 in one-time funds. At a minimum, we urge replacement of one-time funds with on-going money.
5. **Recognition of enrollment growth** to maintain access to higher education.

Final Thought: This year is an opportunity for strategic economic development investments.