

# Report of the Chair

March 2007

Student Success

- **University of Utah:**

**Erica Rojas.** A first generation college student who came to the U.S. with her parents when she was 12 years-old, Erica is an exceptional young woman. She has been a student at the University of Utah for only two years, but already has senior standing with a 4.0 GPA, due, in part, to Advanced Placement classes she took while at Highland High. Her major is Political Science with a minor in Ethnic Studies. Her areas of study include international human rights and social justice policy. Erica is a Larry Miller Scholar, a McNair Scholar, the L.E.A.P. Peer Advisor and serves on the University Neighborhood Partners board as the L.E.A.P. liaison. She completed an internship with the Utah Chapter of the National Council for Community and Justice. Erica is determined to continue her studies in graduate school.

- **Utah State University:**

**Shannon Babb.** A day spent in a USU Extension workshop yielded a longtime mentoring relationship between professor Nancy Mesner and freshman Shannon Babb, a budding teen scientist who has garnered impressive awards in national and international science competitions. In high school, Shannon conducted self-initiated research that has captured the attention of water scientists, government water professionals and legislators. Sought by numerous universities, she chose USU. "Its Watershed Sciences Department is one of the few of its kind in the world," she said.

- **Weber State University:**

**Derek Shenefelt.** A senior zoology student at Weber State University, Derek recently presented his research findings at the Conference on Retroviruses and Opportunistic Infections in Los Angeles. He was one of only 12 students nationwide selected for a prestigious undergraduate research fellowship offered at the University of Colorado last summer, where he conducted lab research on Acquired Immune Deficiency Syndrome (AIDS). In addition to presenting at several conferences, Derek recently had his research published.

- **Southern Utah University:**

**Jacob Johnson.** SUU graduate Jacob Johnson has been promoted to the position of Legislative Assistant on the personal staff of U.S. Senator Orrin Hatch. Jacob will help the Senator implement his agenda on a variety of issues, including transportation, housing, small business, commerce, and Indian affairs. Jacob started working for Hatch as an intern in 2002. He became a staff assistant for Hatch when he was chairman of the Senate Judiciary Committee, then came to the Senator's personal staff as a legislative correspondent, then legislative aide. In his service, Johnson has met with constituents and others on Hatch's behalf, helped draft speeches and press statements, and prepared the Senator for hearings and meetings. Jacob graduated in 2001 from SUU with a degree in business management.



- **College of Eastern Utah:**

**Tyler Kepkay.** Golden Eagles men's basketball guard Tyler Kepkay is currently the highest leading scorer in the nation, according to the National Junior College Athletic Association, Division-One schools stats. His individual scoring average is over 28 points per game, according to the NJCAA. Tyler is also the leader in field-goal percentage with 48.43 percent, and second highest free-throw leader at 89.2 percent. Kepkay is from Vancouver, British Columbia. He has made a verbal agreement to play for the University of Utah next year.

- **Dixie State College:**

**Casey Bywater.** Dixie State College student Casey Bywater, a sophomore from Park City, Utah, has received appointment to the United States Air Force Academy in Colorado Springs, Colo. Bywater will leave for the Academy at the end of June, where he will participate in two months of basic training prior to the start of the Academy's fall semester. He will attend the Academy for four years and will pursue a bachelor's degree in engineering. From there Bywater, who will be commissioned as a second lieutenant upon graduation, plans to advance to pilot training for three to four more years in hopes of becoming a fighter pilot, which will then be followed by a 10-year commitment to the United States Air Force. Bywater has attended Dixie State College since the spring of 2006, when he enrolled at the college after graduating early from Park City High School. He will graduate with an associate of science degree and a 3.96 GPA in May.

- **Utah Valley State College:**

**David Sseinja.** David established the Sseinja Children's Foundation in 1999 as a college student to further education and community development in Uganda. When a friend from Utah encouraged David to come to the U.S. for a college education, David selected UVSC because of its friendly atmosphere and supportive Multicultural Center. As a recent UVSC graduate with a bachelor's degree in history, David continues to work tirelessly to further the reach of the Sseinja Children's Foundation, whose mission is to protect and heal women and children from the effects of war and HIV/AIDS. In April 2007, David will host the grand opening of the foundation's children's clinic in Uganda where direly-needed medical services will be provided to villagers free of charge through donations and medically-trained volunteers. David's foundation has also begun offering micro finance credit to the village's poverty-stricken widows.

- **Salt Lake Community College:**

**Tim Huval.** Tim earned an A.S. degree in business management at Salt Lake Community College. He also ran the Bookstore, taught management and computer classes, and directed the Custom Fit and Continuing Education programs for the college. Following his tenure at SLCC, Tim Huval was hired as Manager of Training & Development, Global Operations with Gateway, Inc. Ultimately, Tim was responsible for human resources leadership and business co-leadership in seven Gateway factories located from South Dakota to Malaysia. Tim currently holds the position of Senior Vice President at Bank of America, where he is in charge of human resources for a division that has \$8 billion in revenue, \$4 billion in net income annually, and employs 13,000 associates globally. Tim has served on many community boards and organizations, including the United Way and the Utah Information Technology Association.



# Student Success

- **Utah College of Applied Technology:**

**Jarred Israelsen.** Jarred came to UCAT's Southeast campus (SEATC) having been diagnosed with "Ausbergers Syndrome," a form of autism. He had spent many years living in almost total isolation, rarely leaving his home. Jarred indicated he had dropped out of high school due to persecution. When he arrived at the college, assessments indicated that Jarred was very intelligent. Over the next year, he surpassed all expectations and completed every computer course offered. He also went through SEATC's communication courses and began to socialize in ways that had previously been determined unobtainable. Jarred is now doing the "once deemed impossible" and is currently completing his associate's degree at the College of Eastern Utah.

