

Salt Lake-Tooele Region Career and Technical Education Study
November 29, 2007
Commissioner's Findings and Recommendations

INTRODUCTION

Since the creation of the Utah College of Applied Technology (UCAT) in 2001, the Utah State Board of Regents has taken several initiatives to coordinate and facilitate the operation of UCAT with the Utah System of Higher Education. The overall purpose has been to determine how career and technical education programs can best be provided to students. This effort is conditioned in part by the fact that higher education resources are limited and that a fundamental purpose of coordinating higher education is to create systems and institutions that complement each other, provide easy transitions for students to achieve their educational and career goals, and maximize the efficient use of resources, broadly considered.

The task of integrating UCAT must be seen as a process, not as a single legislative act, for several important reasons.

- *First, every campus in UCAT has a separate funding and programmatic history. Despite the fact that UCAT is a single college by organization and structure, it is, nevertheless, the sum of multiple campuses. Some of these campuses are well developed with sizeable student enrollment, significant physical assets, and established programs and services. Other campuses are in the beginning stages of development.*
- *A second consideration is that career and technical education is not the exclusive responsibility of any single organization or institution. Career and technical education is a shared responsibility across the K-12 system, UCAT, and the community colleges and universities in the Utah System of Higher Education. Coordination requires much more planning because there are multiple authorities and institutions that deliver these programs and services.*
- *Third, several UCAT colleges exist in communities or service regions that are also served by other institutions, both in public and higher education. These institutions must work together if the values of complementary roles and efficient use of resources are to be realized.*

In light of these considerations, the Utah State Board of Regents authorized several studies to determine the optimal way of organizing and providing career and technical education programs in specific regions of the State. The study of the Salt Lake County and Tooele County service region, which involved the public school districts in the region, Salt Lake Tooele Applied Technology College, and Salt Lake Community College, was authorized by the Utah State Board of Regents on September 14, 2006. The study was launched in January 2007.

A study team was organized in January 2007 with Dr. Gary Carlston serving as chair. Study team members were drawn from the Commissioner of Higher Education staff, the State Office of Education, The Division of Facilities and Construction Management, the Utah College of Applied Technology, Salt Lake Tooele Applied Technology College, and Salt Lake Community College. An advisory group representing public schools, public school board members, business and industry, SLCC, SLTATC, and the Department of Workforce Service was similarly organized to guide the development of study questions and to respond to the report as it developed. Every effort was made to include a broad base of representatives from the institutions affected by the study and to proceed in a deliberate and thoughtful way as each element of the study was considered. After the initial report was reviewed and finalized by the study committee and accepted unanimously by the advisory board, two days of hearings were scheduled to allow for additional responses from affected groups. Such groups included school board members, business and industry representatives, UCAT Trustees, SLCC Trustees, presidents of SLCC, UCAT, and SLTATC, public school superintendents and CTE directors, and a CTE representative from the Utah State Office of Education.

Representatives were provided the study report in advance of the meetings and were asked to respond to specific questions:

- a. Is there important information that should be added to the report?*
- b. Is there information in the report that should be corrected?*
- c. What do you see as the advantages and disadvantages of each scenario outlined in the report?*
- d. Would you suggest another scenario?*
- e. Do you see complications or unintended consequences in any of the scenarios?*

Paul Thompson, former president of Weber State University, and Steve Laing, former district superintendent and State Superintendent, chaired these meetings and served as independent observers. Reports of their observations and summaries of responses gathered during the hearings are appended to this report.

SUMMARY OF REPORT FINDINGS

- **Mission:**
 - a. There are similar programs at SLCC and SLTATC that result in similar outcomes for students. There are differences in approach, delivery, length and scope of services, but the results are the same.
 - b. Mission overlap has created “turf battles,” resulting in competition for students, space in public education facilities, and legislative funding resources.
 - c. Both SLCC and SLTATC serve high school students and adults, including special populations of disadvantaged students.
- **Student Enrollment (total students served – adult and secondary – 51,009):**
 - a. **Secondary Students** – In 2005-06, SLTATC served less than 1 percent of the secondary CTE student population in the region (393 students, compared to 53,058 served by public education).
 - b. **Adult Students** – In 2005-06, SLTATC served approximately 2 percent of the combined total number of adult students attending Salt Lake Community College and Salt Lake Tooele ATC. SLTATC served 1,080 students. SLCC served 43,505 students.
 - c. **SLTATC Enrollment** – Enrollment at SLTATC dropped from 2,551 in 2002-2003 to 1,323 in 2004-2005. Enrollment has been relatively stable in 2005-2006 and 2006-2007 at 1,471 and 1,444, respectively.
 - d. **SLCC Enrollment** – Using the same methodology for determining UCAT headcount, SLCC enrollment increased from 2003 (47,120) to 2007 (50,295).
- **College credit:**
 - a. High School students can receive credit from SLCC for “college” work that can be applied to future higher education experiences. This is principally from concurrent enrollment programs.
 - b. In 2005-06 approximately 6,876 high school students participated in concurrent enrollment programs. Of those, 3,929 students took a CTE-related course. The total number of students who participated in the SLTATC non-credit program is 393.
 - c. According to business and industry representatives, credit is generally less important to adult students, depending on their career goals and employment requirements. However, credit can

be very important for students to build career pathways that lead from one level of training to another, the goal being to achieve a self-sustaining wage.

▪ **Cost Issues:**

- a. Tuition rates are not consistent between institutions for similar services. Non-credit tuition is higher for SLCC students.
- b. The state tax subsidy is greater for SLTATC than SLCC for providing similar services to similar students. Tax revenues for SLTATC represent 86 percent of their education and general funds. For the Skills Center at SLCC, tax funds represent 79 percent of education and general funds. For SLCC, tax funds represent 60 percent of similar education and general totals. (2005-2006 figures)
- c. The cost of instruction for CTE programs is higher at SLTATC. Full cost per FTE is \$11,344. Cost per membership hour is \$12.60. At SLCC, the full cost per FTE is \$6,726. Full cost per membership hour is \$7.47. (2005-2006 figures)

▪ **Facilities:**

To date, SLTATC has not requested the development of a formal campus or permanent facility; however, such considerations have been made in the past. DFCM provided some general estimates for the funding required for the development of a "stand-alone" campus similar to those at other campus sites. Clearly, the estimates vary, depending on location and the size and number of buildings. Land costs would range from \$9 million to \$40 million. A single start-up building of 50,000 square feet would cost \$15 to \$20 million in today's dollars. Consequently, a start-up building with an appropriate campus would range from \$24 million to \$60 million. A full build-out of four or five buildings on a separate campus could be in the \$89 to \$140 million range.

▪ **Strategic Alliances and Collaboration**

- a. There have been multiple efforts to develop partnerships across institutions. The results have been mixed. The Wasatch Front Consortium has been an effective mechanism for developing partnerships. Through the Consortium, three (3) articulation agreements have been reached across nine program areas between SLCC and SLTATC. Approximately 80 career pathways have been developed between SLCC and local school districts. Approximately 30 career pathways have been developed between local school districts and SLTATC.
- b. The Strategic Alliance between SLTATC and SLCC signed in June 2004 was intended to resolve issues of institutional role and mission and to develop clear plans to reduce, if not eliminate, duplication of services and programs. The expectations of this Strategic Alliance Agreement have not been realized. There have been multiple meetings and discussions; however, many of the core issues remain unresolved.

SUMMARY OF FINDINGS – HEARINGS

Representatives from eight key groups met with Paul Thompson and Steve Laing to respond to the report and to suggest the advantages and/or disadvantages of each scenario listed in the report. The entire reports are included with other documents herein. Common themes are not mentioned across all respondents, but some ideas received support from several groups.

- a. Virtually everyone agrees that the SLCC Skills Center and the SLTATC need to be combined. Some respondents prefer the Skills Center moving to SLTATC. Others favor moving SLTATC to the Skills Center at SLCC.

- b. Many respondents wanted to ensure the viability of UCAT programs, even if a merger occurred. This could be done in part with line-item or program funding that would allow for monitoring programs and the level of services provided to students.
- c. Assuming the possibility of a consolidation, public school representatives felt rather strongly that an advisory board or similar structure needed to be created to inform SLCC of public school needs. Ongoing services to secondary-school students was seen as essential.
- d. Most respondents agreed that there is a need for a greater number and variety of CTE programs.
- e. Tooele is an emerging new region, requiring services. It is essential that CTE programs be made available in the region. The Tooele region needs more planning and attention.
- f. SLTATC may not be a competitive college, given the significant resources of school districts on the one hand and SLCC on the other. The lack of growth and program development over a six-year period is an issue.
- g. Respondents were split over the issue of a consolidation versus the continuation of SLTATC as a stand-alone institution.
- h. Credit is considered by most parties to be critical to students as they seek higher levels of training.

RECOMMENDATIONS AND RATIONALE

1. **The Salt Lake Tooele Applied Technology College should be consolidated within Salt Lake Community College. The consolidation of mission, role, and responsibility will maximize resources and best meet the needs of students and employers. Budgets and other assets should be transferred to SLCC. Several points of rationale are pertinent:**
 - a. **The combined institution eliminates the long-standing overlap of mission and roles between the separate institutions. The comprehensive community college role of SLCC can accommodate all of the features and program offerings currently provided by SLTATC. The duplication of specific competing programs would be eliminated.**
 - b. **Programs can be better coordinated within a single institution. The ongoing efforts to coordinate two institutions competing for many of the same students and resources would give way to better serving students in a single coordinated effort. Improved coordination should increase services and programs for students.**
 - c. **Programs, degree offerings, and career pathway opportunities for students would be increased, giving them more options for future career planning. Students would have access to non-credit, credit and degree programs. SLTATC students are now limited to non-credit programs.**

- d. Confusion about the programs and services of each institution would be eliminated. This would be helpful for students and businesses. SLCC would become the single point of services for the Salt Lake and Tooele Region in providing short-term training, Custom Fit training, STIT, credit and non-credit programs.
- e. A consolidation makes much better use of existing facilities for students and increases opportunities for SLTATC students. Further, the combined institution eliminates the competition for space in public education, reduces the current reliance on leased space, and eliminates any future need for another higher education campus. Most importantly, the combined institution improves opportunities for students who would have full access to some of the finest community college facilities, labs, equipment, faculty and staff in the nation.
- f. The cost of instruction for CTE programs per FTE/membership hour will likely decrease if there is only one institution providing services. Much of the infrastructure (fixed costs) is already in place at SLCC, and there is capacity to add additional students to their CTE programs. One of the reasons costs per FTE and membership hour are high for SLTATC is simply the small number of students served, given the size of the budget. Added students would decrease unit costs, but such students might well be taken from SLCC. The competition to provide similar services to the same students using the same tax dollars does not make good sense.
- g. Despite the considerable efforts and skills of the SLTATC administration and staff, the institution serves a relatively small number of students. After nearly six years of development, and an annual budget of approximately \$3 million, the college serves fewer than 1100 adults and 393 secondary students. School districts make logical arguments for SLTATC to serve secondary students, but the vast majority of students remain in their respective high schools and CTE centers where there are excellent programs and services. SLTATC provides programs to adults but likewise the numbers are small, especially given the fact that there are 555,055 non-agricultural workers in Salt Lake County and 13,597 non-agricultural workers in Tooele County. While the college trains some workers, it is a relatively small portion of the total effort. If SLTATC had access to more training sites, equipment, training funds, skilled faculty, and student services, they would be a more effective and influential part of the overall training effort. The consolidation of SLCC and SLTATC will leverage existing assets to provide better services and opportunities for students and employers.
- h. Multiple attempts have been made to create partnerships in the Salt Lake-Tooele region to better define roles and to reduce the duplication of programs and resources. Despite the efforts of all parties, these partnerships/alliances have had mixed results. Some progress has been made recently, as noted in the Report Findings, but such core issues as overlapping roles and limited resources have not been resolved. The “strategic planning” strategy has not been a fully effective one.

Conditions on the Consolidation

The Salt Lake Community College Administration should develop a transition plan, giving attention to the following issues:

- a. Integrate SLTATC administrators and staff wherever possible. This should be a joint effort of SLCC and UCAT.
- b. Create an administrative unit that brings together a coordinated effort of all non-credit business and industry outreach training. This unit would include all UCAT and Skills Center training as well as Custom Fit, STIT, Jobs Now and other related job-training programs.
- c. Fully integrate the functions and purposes of the Skills Center and SLTATC
- d. Expand the legislative mission and role of the Skills Center to allow it to provide non-credit courses to high school students if needed (similar to what is currently happening at UCAT)
- e. Continue providing services at an east-side location for students who may not be able to get to other SLCC locations. Other strategic locations may be needed.
- f. Expand services in Tooele to both secondary and postsecondary students interested in higher education and CTE training
- g. Examine non-credit tuition rates for students and readjust them to a fair rate for all students
- h. Develop clear metrics and reporting mechanisms to demonstrate the "maintenance of effort" for CTE programs and student opportunities. The president of SLCC should be given the responsibility to design and prepare such a report for each of five years following the consolidation.
- i. Add public school board members to the College Advisory Council which oversees all CTE educational programs. This board coordinates and directs all other CTE program advisory committees.

The Commissioner's Office will continue as a resource and partner in the development and implementation of a transition plan. Progress reports on the transition plan will be made to the Board of Regents on a quarterly basis during the initial year.

RELATED UCAT RECOMMENDATIONS

The Utah State Board of Regents should establish "safe harbor" status for the following regional campuses, indicating that no further consolidation studies will be conducted for these institutions, unless some compelling reason, such as a legislative mandate or fiscal emergency, would suggest otherwise. The "safe harbor" campuses would include Bridgerland ATC, Uintah Basin ATC, Ogden-Weber ATC, Davis ATC, Mountainland ATC, and Southwest ATC.

The Utah State Board of Regents holds open the possibility of future studies concerning Dixie State College and the Dixie Applied Technology College until current studies of a University of Utah-Dixie State College Alliance and the Dixie State College/Southern Utah partnership are completed and recommendations forwarded to the Utah State Board of Regents. The provision of community college functions is vital to the Southern Utah region. Dixie State College represents the only community college in Utah between Utah County and Clark County, Nevada. The Regents hold open the possibility of studying and recommending measures to ensure the community college functions of Dixie State College.