

October 5, 2009

MEMORANDUM

To: State Board of Regents  
From: William A. Sederburg  
SUBJECT: Report on College Access Grant

Issue

In the spring of 2008, the Board of Regents was designated by Governor Huntsman as the state agency to apply and receive the College Access Challenge Grant from the U.S. Department of Education. The Office of the Commissioner has received \$852,385 in federal funds in 2008-2010 to deliver a number of activities which have been focused on increasing the percentage Pell-eligible students in Utah who qualify and receive the federal Academic Competitiveness Grants (ACGs). The grant is administered by Assistant Commissioner Melissa Miller Kincart. Students who qualify for the ACGs are Pell-eligible U.S. citizens, enrolled full-time, and will have participated in a rigorous high school curriculum, like the Utah Scholars Core Course of Study (the same course criteria used for Regents' Scholarship) and may qualify for up to \$750 for first-year college students and up to \$1,300 for second-year college students.

During this time of shrinking state appropriations and budget cuts, this federal grant has been instrumental in helping us maintain capacity and momentum toward increasing academic and financial preparation so more Utah citizens might more fully participate in postsecondary education. In mid-August we received word from the Department that our year one final report had been approved and that our funding was renewed for the second year. Described below are some successes from the first year of our work and highlights as we look to year two of implementation.

2008-2009 Successes

- o Developed and delivered seven regional workshops in which public high school guidance counselors, college financial aid and admissions counselors, and college access program staff (e.g., GEAR UP, TRIO, ETS) received training on Academic Competitiveness Grants (ACGs) and SMART Grants, financial aid, scholarships and navigating the FAFSA so they might have the tools to reach and assist more underserved students. It is estimated that 17,837 2009 seniors could

have benefited from the professional development information participants received from these meetings. Each attendee received a "thumb drive" filled with the training presentations as well as additional resources.

- Printed and distributed 55,000 high school student guides and 15,000 middle school guides.
- Supported and devoted \$150,000 to maintain our college academic, financial and career planning web portal, UtahMentor.org.
- Sustained the Utah Scholars Initiative with eight partner districts and, with the help of 50 + business, community, and higher education leaders, delivered over 230 presentations to more than 9500 8<sup>th</sup> and 9<sup>th</sup> grade students.
- Created in partnership with Utah Campus Compact a mini-grant opportunity called "ImPACT (Improving Preparation, Access, & Communities Together)" designed to strengthen or encourage collaborations between K-12 schools, communities, and colleges and universities to increase awareness and college-going rates of low-income and disadvantaged youth while increasing the ability of faculty and staff to create stronger links between academic coursework and engaging students in the community. Awarded \$22,500 to the following projects:
  - Weber State University's Community Involvement Center and Education Access and Outreach office, in collaboration with the AVID (Advancement Via Individual Determination)
  - Westminster College-East High School Access for Success program
  - The University of Utah's *Adelante* Partnership and Face the Movement Mentoring Program
  - Utah State University's and Logan High School's partnership for the recruitment and retention of underrepresented students

#### 2009-2010 Highlights to Date

- Created and delivered the first Utah System of Higher Education conference for secondary counselors to aid them in helping students successfully prepare and transition to college.
- Redesigned the High School College Guide in partnership with the admissions and public relations offices of all Utah colleges and universities.
- Deepened the Utah Scholars Initiative (USI) within our existing partner districts by expanding to more schools servicing underserved students and encouraged participation of two new districts. In October 2009, USI will launch a new website and publications in both English and Spanish.

Commissioner's Recommendation

This is an information item only; no formal action by the Board is required. However, the Board is encouraged to read and take note of the information in this memorandum, and note that further follow-up will be handled by the Commissioner's Office as part of the Board's Participation strategic objective.

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William A. Sederburg, Commissioner

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