

HIGHER ED MATTERS

Utah System of Higher Education, January 2013

Higher Education Prepares Students for Today's Economy

As the Utah System of Higher Education works to achieve the state's goal that 66% of adults hold a degree or certificate by 2020, it is useful to examine the areas of study being pursued by our students alongside the top jobs in terms of growth, demand and wages that will be available for college graduates in Utah between now and 2020.

The first list below highlights the most common majors selected by students at USHE institutions. As you look through the list, it is evident that many Utah students are selecting majors that reflect the priority areas identified by the business community as high-demand, high-wage fields. These include STEM (science, technology, engineering & math) and health professions that are being prioritized by USHE in its 66by2020 efforts.

The second list highlights Utah's top jobs by growth, demand and wages between now and 2020. Many of the jobs listed can be successfully filled by graduates majoring in the fields most commonly selected by Utah students.

Most Common Majors at USHE Institutions (in order)*

Health Professions
Business & Marketing
Social Science & Public Administration
Education
Vocational Studies
Engineering & Related Technologies
Psychology
Communications
Visual & Performing Arts
Computer & Information Sciences

*Does not include General Studies associates degrees for transfer into 4-year programs.

Utah's 5-Star Jobs 2010-2020 (in order)

Registered Nurses
General & Operations Managers
Sales, Manufacturing
Accountants & Auditors
First-Line Construction Supervisors
Secondary School Teachers
Management Analysis
Software Developers
Computer Programers

Department of Workforce Services, Utah Job Outlook

It is worth noting that the most popular majors largely follow the areas of greatest demand in the marketplace.

New Report Shows that Recent Grads are Protected from Recession's Worst Effects

The value of a college education, especially during hard economic times, was again reinforced by a recent report from The Pew Charitable Trusts. The report, *How Much Protection Does a College Degree Afford?*, looked at the impact of the recession on recent college graduates, age 21-24. Prior to the 2008 recession, 55% of young adults with only a high school degree were employed, compared to 64% of those with an associate's degree and 69% with a bachelor's degree. Employment declines during the recession were felt most strongly for those with no more than a high school degree (16%), followed by 11% decreases for young adults with an AA degree.

Those with a bachelor's degree saw the smallest impact of the recession, experiencing only 7% employment declines.

The study counters recent discussion in popular media that the labor market is failing recent college graduates. In fact, recent college graduates have been better protected from the recent economic downturn than young adults with lower levels of education. The full report can be found at www.economicmobility.org

ImPACT Subgrants Create Pathways to College Improving Preparation, Access & Communities Together

In order to achieve the state's 66% Goal, we must broaden college participation and completion among those students who have not historically attended college. The Outreach and Access team in the Office of the Commissioner of Higher Education is focused on this effort and is the recipient of the College Access Challenge Grant (CACG) from the US Department of Education. The goal of CACG is to help low-income students and families learn about, prepare for and finance post-secondary education. The Commissioner's Office created a subgrant program to establish or expand access and outreach initiatives at Utah's non-profit colleges and universities. Last year 10 CACG subgrants were awarded to support partnerships that significantly increase the number of low-income and underrepresented students who are prepared to enter and complete college. The following are profiles of three of last year's subgrant recipients and their accomplishments.

Pathways to College Weber State University

This program works with 10 high schools in Weber and Davis Counties. Activities included a multicultural youth conference, attended by over 450 students from across the state. The conference featured workshops on planning for college, scholarship applications, careers and others to help students prepare for the "Real World" of higher education. Pathways to College also held a Summer Summit in June 2012, which provided a college experience to low-income and underrepresented high school students, who spent three days on the Weber State University campus. Participants were assigned two college advocates to work with them during the summit and through their senior year of high school to ensure they succeed in their pathway to college.

Adelante Partnership University of Utah

The Adelante Partnership provides higher educational experiences to elementary and middle school students in order to create a college-going mindset for students whose families may not hold these expectations. The Adelante Partnership involves students at Jackson Elementary and Bryant Middle School in Salt Lake City in field trips to a variety of departments and programs at the University of Utah. Adelante also provides mentors in classrooms and after-school programs. The Partnership is working to develop collaborations between college faculty, parents, and teachers at both schools.



Adelante Partnership Students

College Access Scholars Program Salt Lake Community College

This program works with Horizonte Instruction and Training Center to provide individual, college-oriented coaching from SLCC advisors to underrepresented students and families in order to help them understand the benefits of postsecondary education. Students participate in workshops, field trips and family engagement activities uniquely designed to increase success in higher education. The program includes college visits, financial literacy and test preparation classes, scholarship and financial aid information, professional development for teachers, and transition and first-year college support services. The program serves traditional high school students (grades 9-12) as well as young parents, adult learners, refugee and immigrant students, and youth-in-custody.

2013 ImPACT Subgrantees

Due to the success of the 2011 and 2012 subgrant programs, the Commissioner's Office once again accepted RFPs for one of three levels of funding, along with a 50% institutional match. There were 21 proposals submitted and 11 have been selected. The grants can be used for program planning, start-up or expansion, and must fulfill at least one of the College Access Challenge Grant objectives in supporting awareness, professional development or infrastructure within programs intended to increase college participation and completion among low-income and underrepresented students in Utah.

For all the facts about higher ed in Utah,
check out the 2013 Data Book.
Available now on our website.
higheredutah.org/about/research-data
