

Higher Education Appropriations Subcommittee Request: Student Athlete Graduation Improvement Funding *2017 Legislative Session Senate Bill 2*

This Issue Brief is in response to the Higher Education Appropriations Subcommittee request, to provide further information on how Student Athlete Graduation Improvement funding will be used during fiscal year 2018. Institutions received a total of \$3.1 million were Southern Utah University, Snow College, Dixie State University, Utah Valley University, and Salt Lake Community College.

Southern Utah University: \$1,000,000

The focus of this funding will be to improve graduation performance for student athletes. The Athletic department has budgeted funding for academic advising, counseling, tutoring, life skill programming, additional scholarships, and diversity & inclusion initiatives. Academic support and oversight expenses were allocated across all sports and programs providing specific student-athlete support base on the departments unique needs. Additional scholarship funding was allocated based on equity issues within athletics from a conference and Title IX perspective. As student-athlete population at the University is most likely the most diverse population on campus an investment in diversity and inclusion was considered essential.

The plan will be to expend funds throughout the fiscal year with expenses beginning to be expended during July 2017. We are grateful for the additional funding and look forward to the analysis at the end of the fiscal year to evaluate the success of the programs instituted and the adequacy of funding received. The following measures will be used to determine success: Increase in student athlete retention, graduation rates over time, improved GPA, and improved classroom performance.

Snow College: \$300,000

Funding will be used to improve the academic performance of Snow College athletes. Measures will include GPA, transfer rates, graduation rates, and individual tracking of at risk athletes. In order to accomplish these goals, a study hall coordinator will be hired, the part time academic liaison will be increased to a full time position, coaches will be trained and have duties in advising and academic support, scholarships for summer school will be allocated for those needing credits for graduation, the soccer program will be allocated additional scholarship money, a book bank to ensure athletes have needed books and supplies for class will be created and scholarships for housing for football players will be allocated.

Dixie State University: \$500,000

Fund 25% of eight full-time head coaching positions, including two (Softball and Track/Cross Country) newly upgraded from part-time to full-time. Full-time head coaches are expected to devote at least 25% of their time and effort to support student-athlete academic success. Fund dedicated professional staff positions for student-athlete success and NCAA compliance (1.5 FTE), including additional student-athlete financial aid and tutoring assistance. Purchase secondary insurance coverage and athletic trainers to reduce frequency and financial impact of student athlete injuries. Fund summer semester and fifth year tuition aid to ensure athletes have means to continue their schooling through summer and, if necessary, after their athletic scholarships

have expired. Student athlete GPA, retention rates, and graduation rates over time will be used to measure success.

Utah Valley University: \$1,000,000

Expenditures are aligned with legislative purpose for student-athlete performance support, including student-athlete welfare, retention and graduation initiatives. Specifically, this funding supports athletic cost of attendance, bridge to graduation program, compliance, mental health specialist, learning specialist, and academic counseling. The allocation of funding was recommended to the President by the Athletic Director and the Vice President of Finance & Administration in consultation with the Budget Office. The following measures will be used to determine the efficacy of this funding; 1) APR (academic performance rate) that tracks the academic progress of student athletes through a team-based metric; 2) GPA trend; 3) NCAA GRO (graduation rate overview); and 4) internal individual student-athlete risk assessment.

Salt Lake Community College: \$300,000

The Student Athlete Graduation Improvement funding is being used to support academic progression, increased access, and student persistence of SLCC student athletes. Primarily the funding will be used for increase access, summer scholarships and financial assistance for the student athletes. This will allow students to address academic needs during the summer when most of the athletes are not competing, and also when they have not received College financial aid. Some of the funding will support, tutoring, and an increased academic advising function by four assistant coaches.