REPORT ON THE 2014 UTAH STATE LEGISLATIVE SESSION

2014 was an unprecedented year for higher education. The Legislature overwhelmingly supported the initiatives set forth by the State Board of Regents and approved an overall 11% increase in funding to the entire system of higher education. The University of Utah is pleased $50M in ongoing funds was appropriated to address the acute equity issues at our sister institutions. Of note, the University of Utah received vital funding for compensation increases as well as funding to complete our vital infrastructure project.

SUCESSES FOR THE UNIVERSITY OF UTAH

- The Legislature approved a 1.25% compensation increase for faculty and staff along with an increase in funding to help cover healthcare and retirement cost increases.

- As requested by the State Board of Regents, the Utah System of Higher Education received $7M in distinctive mission based funding. Of that, a significant portion will be added to ongoing mission based funding at the University of Utah.

- Intent language was passed giving the University of Utah permission to continue with the design portion of The Gary and Ann Crocker Science Center.

- $6.75M in additional capital improvement funds and bonding authority was authorized to complete our critical infrastructure project.

- $150K in ongoing funds and $150K in one-time funds were approved for the Natural History Museum of Utah.

- $150K in one-time funding for the College of Nursing to address a shortage of clinical faculty.

APPROVED NON-STATE FUNDED BUILDINGS

- Permission was given to proceed with the expansion and renovation of the Alumni House.
Permission was given to proceed with the construction of the Lassonde Living Center.

LEGISLATION OF INTEREST TO THE UNIVERSITY COMMUNITY WITH OUTCOMES

HB 61, Clean Air Programs by Representative Patrice Arent, modifies the process for the Department of Environmental Quality to make a loan or grant from the Clean Fuels and Vehicle Technology Program, including: allowing electric-hybrids to be eligible for the program; and removing the state match requirements for a grant for refueling infrastructure; describes the requirements for receiving a grant from the Division of Air Quality; authorizes the Air Quality Board to make rules; and makes technical changes. Passed

HB 72, Higher Education Grievance Procedure by Rep. Mark Wheatley, requires the Board of Regents to enact regulations pertaining to an employee grievance. The legislation requires sworn testimony for hearings related to employee demotions and terminations. The bill was amended to exclude faculty. Passed

1st Sub. HB 92, Utah Education and Telehealth Network by Rep. Ronda Menlove, creates the Utah Education and Telehealth Network (UETN) within the state system of higher education by combining the Utah Telehealth Network with the Utah Education Network. Passed

9th Sub. HB105, Plant Extract Amendments by Rep. Gage Froerer, permits the Department of Agriculture and a department-certified higher education institution to grow industrial hemp for the purpose of agricultural or academic research and grants permission for families to purchase hemp extract for the use of treating children with intractable epilepsy. Passed

1st Sub. HB155, Utah Communication Agency Network and 911 Committee Amendments by Rep. Brad Dee, merges the Utah Communications Agency Network and the Utah 911 Committee into an independent state agency names the Utah Communications Authority. This bill reallocated the .07¢ cell phone surcharge for the Utah Poison Control Center to the Computer Aided Dispatch Restricted Account. Passed

1st Sub. HB 405, Postsecondary School State Authorization by Rep. James Dunnigan, modifies requirements for proprietary colleges and universities and allows the Dept. of Commerce to enter into interstate reciprocity agreements on behalf of USHE, alleviating the requirement for institutions to individually enter into such agreements. This provides a more efficient and coordinated process for institutions to offer services in other states (e.g. distance education). Passed
SB 16, Veterans Tuition Gap Coverage by Sen. Luz Robles, provides state funded grants to qualifying military veterans who have maximized federal financial aid benefits. Passed


3rd Sub. SB 34, State Wide Data Alliance and Utah Futures by Sen. Howard Stephenson, This bill amends provisions related to Utah Futures and appropriates money to support a statewide data system for public education, higher education, and workforce data. Passed

1st Sub. SB48, Emergency Telephone Service Law Amendments by Sen. Wayne Harper, reallocated .07¢ surcharge on all cell phone lines from the Utah Poison Control Center to the state unified E-911 emergency service. Failed

SB 68, Veterans Centers by Sen. Peter Knudson, requires the State Board of Regents to study the feasibility of providing a veterans center or veterans services at each USHE institution as well as develop a plan for implementing those services. Passed

1st Sub. SB 80, Statewide Online Education Amendments by Sen. Howard Stephenson, allows a USHE institutions to offer a secondary school level course or a concurrent enrollment course through the Statewide Online Education Program operated by the Utah State Office of Education. Failed

1st Sub. SB 170, Education Loan Amendments by Senator Peter Knudson, modifies the Utah Consumer Code in relation to student loans limiting garnishments related to student loans provided by private lenders. This bill replaces a previous version that would have negatively impacted USHE institutions as well as the Utah Higher Education Assistance Authority (UHEAA). Passed

SCR 3, Concurrent Resolution on the School of Dentistry Serving Underprivileged Children by Sen. Pat Jones, this resolution urges that oral health for the underserved population of Utah be addressed by the cooperative efforts of government, health care training programs, practicing health care professionals, business and community leaders, and insurance companies; and recognizes the University of Utah’s School of Dentistry for its commitment to serve these underserved populations with critical prevention and intervention dental care and to work closely with the other vested parties to improve the oral health management of these very vulnerable groups. Passed