

**Utah Board of Higher Education
Virtual Meeting
Thursday, October 2, 2025**

**COMMITTEE OF THE WHOLE
MINUTES**

Board Members Present

Jon Cox, Vice Chair
Javier Chavez Jr.
Jeremy Hafen
Jodi Hart
Danny Ipson
Garrett Largent
Steve Neeleman
Aaron Skonnard
Cydni Tetro

Board Members Absent

Amanda Covington, Chair

Office of the Commissioner

Geoffrey Landward, Commissioner
Alison Adams, General Counsel and Board Secretary
Taylor Adams, Associate Commissioner of Student Affairs
TJ Bliss, Associate Commissioner for Academic Affairs
Trisha Dugovic, Director of Communication
Brynn Fronk, Executive Assistant to the Utah Board of Higher Education
Jordan Hill, Assistant Commissioner for Industry Workforce Initiatives
Vic Hockett, Associate Commissioner of Talent Ready Utah
Carrie Mayne, Chief Economist
Katie Mazzie, Associate Commissioner of Strategic Initiatives, Community & Government Relations
Jimmy McDonough, Assistant Commissioner of Education Workforce Programs
Hilary Renshaw, Associate General Counsel
Brian Shuppy, Senior Assistant Commissioner for Budget & Finance
Angela Smith, The Nucleus Institute
Angie Stallings, Deputy Commissioner and COO
Nate Talley, Deputy Commissioner and CFO
Melissa Van Hien, Executive Assistant to the Commissioner and Office Manager
Jacob Wright, Senior Assistant Commissioner of Facilities and Finance
Kim Ziebarth, Associate Commissioner of Technical Education

Institutional Presidents Present

Mindy Benson, Southern Utah University
Darin Brush, Davis Technical College
Chad Campbell, Bridgerland Technical College
Brad Mortensen, Weber State University
Stacey McIff, Snow College
Greg Peterson, Salt Lake Community College
Taylor Randall, University of Utah

Jordan Rushton, Dixie Technical College
Shane Smeed, Utah Tech University
Al Smith, Utah State University (interim)
Jim Taggart, Ogden Weber Technical College
Astrid Tuminez, Utah Valley University
Aaron Weight, Uintah Basin Technical College

Others

Mark Aiken, Vice President of Instruction, Tooele Technical College

Christina Baum, Vice President of Digital Transformation and CIO, Utah Valley University
Clair Canfield, Professor, Utah State University
Dave Cowley, Vice President for Finance and Administrative Services, Utah State University
Troy D'Ambrosio, Chief of Staff & Vice President for Innovation, University of Utah
Marvin Dodge, Executive Director, Utah Department of Government Operations
Mark Halverson, Vice President for Administrative Services, Weber State University
Teresa Kehl, Deputy Chief of Staff and Special Assistant to the First Lady, University of Utah
Chris Martin, Vice President of Finance and Administration/CFO, Salt Lake Community College
Kirk Michaelis, Vice President of Administrative Services/CFO, Mountainland Technical College
Lisa Moon, Executive Vice President and CIO, Bridgerland Technical College
Jim Mortensen, Vice President of Finance and Auxiliary Services, Utah Valley University
Paul Morris, Vice President of Administrative Affairs, Utah Tech University
Val Peterson, Vice President for Administration & Strategic Relations, Utah Valley University
Charles Rey, PhD student, University of Utah
Patricia Walker, Vice President of Student Services and Marketing, Tooele Technical College

Vice Chair Cox called the meeting to order at 8:30 a.m.

Committee of the Whole

Vice Chair Cox and Commissioner Landward addressed the tragedy at Utah Valley University. This was an information item only; no action was taken.

Campus Safety Discussion

Commissioner Landward proposed the creation of a campus safety task force to Board members. **Vice Chair Cox moved to direct the Commissioner to create a task force to evaluate campus safety at USHE institutions and make recommendations for systemwide policies and practices. Board member Largent seconded the motion, and the Board members in attendance voted unanimously in favor. The motion passed.**

Resolution of Appreciation for President Paul Hacking

Vice Chair Cox highlighted the Resolution of Appreciation for President Paul Hacking and the President's career at Tooele Technical College. **Board member Ipson moved to approve the Resolution of Appreciation for President Paul Hacking. Board member Neeleman seconded the motion, and the Board members in attendance voted unanimously in favor. The motion passed.**

Strategic Plan Updates

Katie Mazzie introduced the agenda item. Vic Hockett, Jordan Hill, and Jimmy McDonough followed with a presentation showcasing Talent Ready Utah's key achievements and their alignment with the strategic plan. Angela Smith then introduced the Nucleus Institute, spotlighting its contributions to the strategic vision and providing an overview of its foundational pillars. Board member Neeleman requested Vic and his team report in the future on key Talent Hub metrics, including the number of internships posted, match rate, and fulfillment figures. This was an information item only; no action was taken.

September Utah Legislative Debrief

Commissioner Landward summarized the Executive Appropriations Committee Meeting in September, where the committee formally took the recommendation on the cut and reallocation of the institutions' reinvestment plans. This was an information item only; no action was taken.

Federal Update

Katie Mazzie provided a federal government update to the Board members. Vice Chair Cox requested an update on the Trump administration's university compact at the next Board meeting. This was an information item only; no action was taken.

Approval of Academic Centers and Institutes

Commissioner Landward provided background on the review of academic centers and institutes. TJ Bliss walked the Board through the proposed policy and answered questions from the Board members and presidents. **Board member Ipson moved to approve the policy as drafted and to direct the Commissioner's office to return to the Board with a review process. Board member Ipson further moved to end the pause on approval of new academic centers and institutes enacted in July 2025. Board member Hart seconded the motion, and the Board members in attendance voted unanimously in favor. The motion passed.**

Report on Academic Program Activity

Commissioner Landward introduced the Report on Academic Program Activity, followed by the presentation of the report by TJ Bliss. TJ explained the program approval process to the Board members, who then discussed it. This was an information item; no action was taken.

Finding Beauty in Conflict

Commissioner Landward introduced the agenda item and the presenter and then turned the time over to presenter Professor Clair Canfield. Professor Canfield presented Finding Beauty in Conflict to the Board members and institutional presidents. President Tuminez shared details about the civil discourse initiative "Our Better Selves for a Better America" they are working on at UVU. This was an information item; no action was taken.

UVU Request to Lease Property & Construct a Non-State Funded Building

Nate Talley presented the project details. The Board expressed concerns about legal indemnification, long-term viability, student demand projections, and fundraising risks associated with the Oxford initiative, emphasizing the need for contractual safeguards and strategic foresight. President Tuminez, Val Peterson, and Jim Mortensen addressed the concerns of the Board members. **Board member Tetro moved to approve Utah Valley University's proposed lease agreement and associated construction project as requested. Board member Tetro further moved that UVU work with the Commissioner's Office and the Division of Facilities Construction and Management to identify and secure any additional authorization for this project as required by state statute or policy. Board member Skonnard seconded the motion, and the Board members in attendance voted unanimously in favor. The motion passed.**

Division of Facilities Management and Construction Interim Committee Deep Dive – Overview

Nate Talley introduced the topic, and Marvin Dodge elaborated on the DFCM Deep Dive Committee activities and implications for USHE. This was an information item only; no action was taken.

Fiscal Year 2026-2027 Capital Budget Recommendation Overview

Nate Talley introduced the capital project requests, dedicated project fund balances, and Board-adopted capital budget guidance that shaped this year's process.

Degree-Granting Non-Dedicated

Board member Ipson moved to submit the previously prioritized *Utah State University Math, Artificial Intelligence, Data and Analytics Center* non-dedicated capital project request to the Legislature for consideration during the 2026 General Session, conditional on the Board's review and approval of the final construction budget estimate for the project. Board member Ipson further moved that if the Board does not authorize Utah State University's dedicated project request, USU shall contribute the entirety of its estimated Fiscal Year 2027 dedicated project funds to the project. Board member Tetro seconded the motion, and the Board members in attendance voted unanimously in favor. The motion passed.

Technical College Non-Dedicated

Board member Tetro moved to submit the previously prioritized *Dixie Technical College Trades & Technology Building* non-dedicated capital project request to the Legislature for consideration during the 2026 General Session, conditional on the Board's review and approval of the final construction budget estimate for the project. Board member Tetro further moved that the existing Technical College Capital Project Fund balance of \$10.3 million be used to contribute to the cost of the project. Board member Neeleman seconded the motion, and the Board members in attendance voted unanimously in favor. The motion passed.

Fiscal Year 2026-2027 Technical College Dedicated Project Fund Requests

FY 2026-27 USHE Technical College Dedicated Project Fund Requests presentations were given by the following technical college institutions:

- Bridgerland Technical College – President Chad Campbell and Lisa Moon
- Southwest Technical College – President Brennan Wood
- Mountainland Technical College – Kirt Michaelis

Board Deliberations

Nate Talley reviewed the Commissioner's recommendation, which the Board members discussed.

Board member Ipson moved to submit the following technical college dedicated projects to the Legislature for consideration during the 2026 General Session, conditional on the Board's review and approval of the final construction budget estimates for the projects:

- Southwest Technical College's Diesel Technology Program Building, in an amount up to \$3.5 million; and;
- Bridgerland Technical College's Main Campus – Partial Remodel, Renovation, and Repurpose (Phase 1) project in an amount equal to the balance of the FY 2027 \$7,310,300 TCCPF appropriation.

Board member Skonnard seconded the motion, and the Board members in attendance voted unanimously in favor. The motion passed.

Fiscal Year 2026-2027 Degree-Granting Dedicated Project Fund Requests

The following degree-granting institutions gave FY 2026-27 USHE Degree-Granting Dedicated Project Fund Requests presentations:

- Utah State University – Interim President Al Smith
- Weber State University – President Brad Mortensen and Mark Halverson
- Utah Tech University – President Shane Smeed and Paul Morris
- Salt Lake Community College – President Greg Peterson

Board Deliberations

The Board members discussed and asked questions regarding the presentations. Nate Talley walked the Board through the Commissioner's recommendation.

Board member Chavez Jr. moved to submit the following degree-granting institution dedicated projects to the Legislature for consideration during the 2026 General Session, conditional on the Board's review and approval of the final construction budget estimates for the projects:

- **Weber State University's Student Services North Renovation (Phase 2)**
- **Utah Tech University's Planning and Design for the Health Sciences Building & Taylor Remodel**
- **Salt Lake Community College's Aviation Maintenance Building**

Board member Neeleman seconded the motion, and the Board members in attendance voted unanimously in favor. The motion passed.

Fiscal Year 2026-2027 Operating Budget Recommendation

Nate Talley introduced the agenda item. He walked the Board through the budget requests, which the Board members and presidents discussed.

Board member Tetro moved to approve the FY 2026-2027 USHE system-level operating budget priorities as shown. Board member Neeleman seconded the motion, and the Board members in attendance voted unanimously in favor. The motion passed.

Board member Tetro moved to approve the FY 2026-2027 USHE degree-granting institution and technical college operating budget priorities as shown, conditional on the availability of state resources. Board member Neeleman seconded the motion, and the Board members in attendance voted unanimously in favor. The motion passed.

Board member Tetro moved to authorize the Commissioner to make any technical adjustments, including rounding, necessary to finalize the budget prior to submitting it to the Governor and the Legislature. She further moved to authorize the Commissioner, in consultation with the Board's Executive Committee, to update placeholder amounts for prioritized budget items as estimates are finalized. Board member Neeleman seconded the motion, and the Board members in attendance voted unanimously in favor. The motion passed.

Consent Calendar

Board member Ipson moved to approve the consent calendar. Board member Hart seconded the motion, and the Board members in attendance voted unanimously in favor. The motion passed.

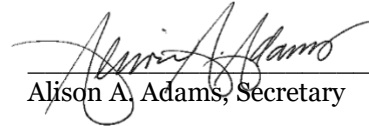
Board member Ipson moved to go into closed session for the purpose of discussing the character, professional competence, or physical or mental health of an individual; impending litigation; or the sale of real property. Board member Neeleman seconded the motion, and the Board members in attendance voted unanimously in favor. The motion passed.

CLOSED SESSION

Board member Skonnard moved to end closed session. Board member Hart seconded the motion, and the Board members in attendance voted unanimously in favor. The motion passed.

Board member Neeleman moved to adjourn. Board member Skonnard seconded the motion, and the Board members in attendance voted unanimously in favor. The motion passed.

The meeting adjourned at 4:38 p.m.


Alison A. Adams, Secretary

Date Approved: November 20, 2025