



USU Board of Trustees Retreat Day 1

Thursday, September 17, 2026 at 8:30 AM - 5:00 PM MDT

Veterinary Medical Education Building - 1185 E 1400 N, Logan, UT
(2nd Floor Conference Room #240)

Attendance

Trustees:

Tessa White, Chair

Gina Gagon, Vice Chair

Max Alder

Brett Hugie

David Huntsman

Luke Johnson

Kacie Malouf

Dave Petersen

Jacey Skinner

Clark Whitworth (virtual)

Ryan Dent (absent)

University Representatives:

Brad Mortensen, President

Heidi Bouck

Janalyn Brown

Steve Campbell

Chris Corcoran

Amanda DeRito

Jessica Oyler

Shannon Pipes

Bill Plate

Paula Reese

MaKenzie Stock

Cam Walker

Courtney White

Matt White

Other:

Taylor Adams, USHE

Selena Grace, NWCCU (virtual)

Agenda

1. Breakfast

8:30 AM

2. Higher Education Landscape Discussion

9:01 AM

Presenter: Dr. Selena Grace, NWCCU

The Board participated in a higher education landscape discussion with Dr. Selena M. Grace, President of the Northwest Commission on Colleges and Universities (NWCCU). Dr. Grace shared national trends and emerging issues affecting colleges and universities, including financial sustainability, enrollment pressures, governance challenges, and a rapidly changing federal regulatory environment. She emphasized that accreditors play a supportive role in helping institutions fulfill their missions while maintaining quality, accountability, and continuous improvement. Dr. Grace also discussed the importance of strong board governance and financial oversight, noting that institutional financial viability and effective governance are among the most significant challenges facing higher education today.

The discussion included an overview of several proposed and recently adopted federal regulations affecting accreditation, student outcomes, transfer policies, and institutional reporting requirements. Dr. Grace reviewed the Accreditation, Innovation, and Modernization

(AIM) rulemaking process and its potential implications for colleges and universities, including a greater emphasis on outcomes, return on investment measures, and institutional flexibility in accreditation. Trustees engaged in a thoughtful discussion regarding financial sustainability, the impact of earnings-based federal metrics on programs in the arts and public service fields, and the importance of maintaining mission-focused academic offerings that serve communities. Dr. Grace encouraged institutions to remain engaged in policy discussions, continue monitoring evolving regulations, and pursue innovation while upholding quality and accountability. The Board expressed appreciation for Dr. Grace's insights and for NWCCU's ongoing partnership and support of the university.

3. Strategic Reflection

9:32 AM

Presenter: President Brad Mortensen

The Board participated in a strategic reflection discussion focused on enrollment trends and student success. Trustees reviewed preliminary fall enrollment data, noting growth in overall headcount driven largely by increased concurrent enrollment participation, while traditional student enrollment and tuition revenue experienced modest declines. The Board discussed the opportunities and challenges associated with concurrent enrollment, including its impact on institutional metrics, student outcomes, degree progression, and financial aid eligibility. Trustees emphasized the importance of strategically aligning concurrent enrollment offerings with career and technical education pathways and providing appropriate advising to help students maximize the value of earned credits. The discussion also explored broader enrollment and retention strategies, including strengthening transfer pathways, re-engaging students who have stopped before completing their degrees, and expanding experiential learning opportunities. Trustees discussed the importance of preparing students for an evolving workforce by emphasizing foundational skills such as critical thinking, communication, and teamwork while ensuring that students have meaningful internship, apprenticeship, and work-based learning experiences that support retention, graduation, and career success.

4. Strategic Plan Update

10:15 AM

Presenters: President Brad Mortensen, VP Jessica Oyler

Trustees reviewed plans for comprehensive program review and expanded use of performance dashboards to provide greater transparency regarding enrollment trends, student success metrics, and workforce alignment. Discussion highlighted efforts to increase industry engagement, expand experiential learning opportunities, and pursue a goal of ensuring all students have access to meaningful internship or apprenticeship experiences. The Board also reviewed progress related to the university's identified areas of distinction, including land and water, food, energy, space and national security, student experience, and strengthening communities, which continue to guide research priorities, legislative initiatives, and strategic investments. Additional discussion focused on statewide partnerships, transfer pathway agreements, strategic staffing and budget management, process improvements through automation, and communication strategies designed to align internal and external stakeholders.

around the university's priorities. Trustees were informed that strategic planning groups are continuing to refine implementation plans and will provide recommendations for future Board consideration.

5. Review Trustee Committees and Timeline

10:30 AM

Presenter: Chair Tessa White

The Board discussed priorities for trustee meetings during the coming year, emphasizing the importance of meaningful, forward-looking discussions that focus on the university's most significant opportunities and challenges. Trustees reflected on progress made during the previous year in improving meeting effectiveness, engagement with key stakeholders, and follow-through on Board initiatives. The discussion centered on ensuring that Board and committee meetings remain focused on strategic issues, with particular emphasis on identifying and advancing the issues that will have the greatest impact on the institution rather than spreading attention across too many competing priorities. Trustees identified student success, particularly first-year retention, as a critical area for continued Board attention and emphasized the importance of regularly reviewing key institutional metrics to support informed decision-making. The Board also discussed strengthening alignment between committee work and institutional priorities through increased collaboration among committee chairs, trustees, and university leadership, as well as periodically evaluating committee structures and meeting schedules to ensure they effectively support the Board's strategic responsibilities. Trustees expressed appreciation for the collaborative relationships among Board members and reaffirmed their shared commitment to advancing student success and the university's mission.

6. Break and Load Bus

10:45 AM

7. Take Bus - Vet Med to South Farm

10:55 AM

8. South Farm Tour

11:20 AM

Trustees toured the USU South Farm and received an overview of the dairy operation, including a demonstration of the facility's robotic milking system and discussions regarding dairy management, animal care, and the technologies used to support daily operations.

9. Take Bus - South Farm to Herms

12:05 PM

10. Lunch

12:30 PM

11. Take Bus - Herms to Water Lab

1:20 PM

12. Water Lab Tour

1:35 PM

Trustees toured the USU Water Research Laboratory and received an overview of the facility's research, outreach, and testing activities

13. Take Bus - Water Lab to Vet Med **2:35 PM**

14. Break **2:50 PM**

15. Blue Moon Training **3:00 PM**

Attendance

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Jacey Skinner

Clark Whitworth (virtual)

Ryan Dent (absent)

Luke Johnson (absent)

Kacie Malouf (absent)

University Representatives:

Brad Mortensen, President

Janalyn Brown

Steve Campbell

Chris Corcoran

Amanda DeRito

Jessica Oyler

Shannon Pipes

Bill Plate

MaKenzie Stock

Other:

Taylor Adams, USHE

Simon Barker, Blue Moon

Jennifer Rettig, Blue Moon

Training materials are provided in the attached PowerPoint presentation.

16. Adjourn **5:00 PM**

Motion

Trustee Petersen moved to adjourn the meeting. Trustee Huntsman seconded the motion.

Voting was unanimous in the affirmative. Meeting adjourned.

Tessa White, Chair

Janalyn Brown, Secretary

Date Approved