



February 12, 2019

Dear Senators, Representatives, and members of the community,

As members of the Utah Student Association, we know firsthand that applying for college can be daunting. There are countless steps to take in order to apply, get accepted, and navigate the financial burden of a higher education. The State of Utah and its institutions spend millions of dollars on resources for students to gain a cost-effective and high-quality education; however, we watch many students miss these opportunities due to complexities of access.

Ninety percent of Utah parents expect their children to go to college, but only sixty-six percent of Utah high school graduates end up enrolling within five years. That missing thirty-four percent of students who do not enroll in college often includes first-generation students, minority students, and low-income students—those who would most benefit from a college credential, which is now necessary to enter and progress in the workforce. With this in mind, how do we help these students gain access to the resources the federal government, the state government, and institutions already provide?

The Utah Board of Regents is asking for \$6 million ongoing to solve the problem by placing a near-peer college access advisor in every Utah high school. Having this point person will give each high school student access to an expert on educational pathways, financial aid, and scholarships, as well as first-year experience programs and other student recourses. Pilot programs have proven that with every meeting a student has with a college access advisor, the likelihood of college enrollment increases by thirteen percent and college graduation increases by five percent.

We know how impactful these advisors will be to students, and, in turn, how impactful those students will be to the state's economy with their educational training and skills. The College Access Advisor initiative is a win-win for our state, our students, and our workforce. We ask that you support the Board of Regents' budget request for the Statewide College Access Advisor Program.

Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,

D'Mia Lamar, USA President, Student Body President | Southern Utah University  
Connor Morgan, USA Executive Vice President, Student Body President | University of Utah  
Jaren Hunsaker, USA Legislative Vice President, Student Body President | Utah State University  
Jordan Slater, Student Body President | Weber State University  
Jazmin May, Student Body President | Westminster College  
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Marc Reynolds, Student Body President | Utah Valley University  
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