In 2014, the Utah Women \& Leadership Project (UWLP) released a research and policy brief titled, "The Status of Women Leaders in Utah Education," ${ }^{1}$ and in 2017 an update brief was published. ${ }^{2}$ These reports focused on the status of women's leadership in both K-12 and postsecondary education across the state of Utah. This brief provides an update for 2021, focused only on the higher education portion of the previous briefs. The purpose of this brief is to determine what, if any, progress has been made in women's leadership within Utah's higher education sector, including public and the two largest private institutions, as well as technical colleges, which were combined with the Utah System of Higher Education (USHE) in July $2020^{3}$ to form the Utah Board of Higher Education (UBHE). This brief compares Utah data with national data and reviews the applicable literature. Comparisons will also be drawn by looking at Utah's data from 2014, 2017, and 2021.

Much of the national data used in this brief comes from the College and University Professional Association for Human Resources (CUPA-HR) and the American Council on Education (ACE). CUPA-HR monitors trends, explores emerging workforce issues, conducts research, and promotes strategic discussions among colleges and universities, while ACE mobilizes the higher education community to shape effective public policy. Both organizations have contributed toward progress for women in leadership in higher education across the nation and abroad. Systemwide and institutional positionspecific data for Utah were obtained by collecting information from websites or contacting key individuals at each college or university.

## Setting the Stage

For this report, we analyzed data from Utah colleges and universities. More specifically, the degree-granting public colleges and universities analyzed within the Utah System of Higher Education (USHE) were Dixie State University (DSU), Salt Lake Community College (SLCC), Snow College (SC), Southern Utah University (SUU), University of Utah (U of U), Utah State University (USU), Utah Valley University (UVU), and Weber State University (WSU). The private higher education institutions analyzed were Brigham Young University (BYU) and Westminster College (WC). In Utah, research-focused institutions included BYU, U of U, and USU. Regional institutions included SUU, DSU, WSU, UVU, and WC, while the two-year colleges were SLCC and SC. The eight Utah technical colleges analyzed included Bridgerland, Davis, Dixie, Mountainland, Ogden-Weber, Southwest, Tooele, and Uintah Basin.

In terms of setting the stage nationally, the 2020 CUPA-HR ${ }^{4}$ report indicated that women held $52 \%$ of senior leadership positions across the US compared to $50 \%$ in 2017. Although seemingly at parity, the percentage of representation did vary on the position held as well as the type of institution and its status (e.g., research-intensive institutions are considered high status). The report ${ }^{5}$ also stated that women held $36 \%$ of senior leadership positions in associate-level community colleges, a significant decline from the percentage we reported in 2017 (43\%). In 2020, Inside Higher Ed ${ }^{6}$ reported that although the number of women in administration was rising, they still faced significant seniority and pay disparities.

Furthermore, the 2020 CUPA-HR report ${ }^{7}$ examined the pipeline for president and provost positions by gathering data on the previous position and place of employment prior to their current appointment. This report found that, in the pipeline to key leadership roles in higher education, $69 \%$ of presidents and $46 \%$ of provosts were hired from outside the institution, while only $31 \%$ of presidents and $54 \%$ of provosts were promoted within their institution. According to research, ${ }^{8}$ this pattern may explain why women still hold less than $40 \%$ of executive leadership roles; women are more geographically bound then men. The rising trend in Utah to hire talent from outside the state may especially negatively impact the pipeline to leadership for women in higher education who live in Utah.

This research and policy brief is organized by position: State Board of Higher Education, Presidents, Cabinet Members, Chief Academic Offers and Vice Presidents, and Academic Deans. These sections will be followed by offering implications and opportunities for the Utah higher education community.

## State Board of Higher Education

State-level governance is typically composed of individuals who are elected or appointed; thus, these roles are not directly associated with the leadership pipeline for women in higher education. However, the decisions made by these governing bodies impact the status of women's leadership around the state. Usually, each state has a governing body that oversees higher education, and these are composed of regents, education board members, or chancellors (see Ohio and Delaware for exceptions).
National: Based on information collected from each state's governing board websites, national data show women comprise $39.8 \%$ of governing bodies, which is an increase from the percentage we reported in both 2017 (33.5\%) and 2014 ( $29.3 \%$ ). States with high representation for women include

Colorado (71.4\%), Connecticut (63.6\%), Idaho (62.5\%), New York (62.5\%), and North Dakota (60\%). States with low representation for women include Arkansas (10\%), Oklahoma (11.1\%), Mississippi (16.7\%), Louisiana (18.8\%), and North Carolina (20\%).
Utah: Utah's State Board of Higher Education is tied for 15 of 50 states in terms of the percentage of board members who are women. It is composed of $44 \%$ women, which is above the national average ( $39.8 \%$ ). The change in membership in July 2020 increased Utah's representation of women, which was $31.6 \%$ in both 2014 and 2017.

## Presidents

National: The 2020 CUPA-HR report ${ }^{9}$ stated that women comprised $33 \%$ of college and university presidencies, with $35.3 \%$ at public and $29.7 \%$ at private colleges and universities. In attempting to find comparison data for technical colleges, the $2017 \mathrm{ACE}^{10}$ report indicated that $36 \%$ of presidents are women in associate-level colleges, and the 2020 CUPAHR data reports $44.4 \%$ of its associate institution presidents are women. Although this institutional classification does not include all technical colleges, it is the best available national measurement. The most recent report by the American Association of Community Colleges (AACC) in $2016{ }^{11}$ stated that women compose $30 \%$ of those in the president or CEO position. Almost no data are available on the status of women leaders in technical colleges. ${ }^{12}$
Utah: In Utah, $50 \%$ of the degree-granting colleges and universities currently have women as presidents, but this varies by institutional characteristics. Four of the eight degreegranting public colleges and universities (SLCC, $U$ of $U$, USU, and UVU) have presidents who are women (up from $25.0 \%$ in 2017 and $12.5 \%$ in 2014). This includes a president of a two-year college (SLCC), one of four regional institutions (UVU), and both research institutions ( U of U and USU). One of two private colleges and universities (WC) has a woman as president as well. In addition, only one of eight technical colleges (Dixie) has the presidential role filled by a woman (12.5\%). Overall, in 2021 Utah ranks higher than the national average for women presidents of colleges and universities, not including technical colleges, where Utah is far below the national average.

## Boards of Trustees or Directors

National: Corporate data from a 2020 study by Kramer and Adams noted that boards that are comprised of at least $30 \%$ women provide a space for meaningful contributions from women; however, data from higher education boards shows otherwise. ${ }^{13}$ Women tend to be excluded from key decisionmaking opportunities and leadership positions on critical subcommittees (e.g., executive committees) even when those boards are composed of more than $30 \%$ women. In the same study of 29 higher education institutions, ${ }^{14}$ women accounted for an average membership of $28 \%$ on the governing boards
of colleges and universities, a decrease in percentages we previously reported in 2014 (30.2\%) and in 2017 (28.4\%). However, we expect that a broader national study would find at least a slight increase. No national data is available for technical college boards of trustees or directors.
Utah: The public and private degree-granting colleges and universities sampled in Utah have boards comprised of $41.1 \%$ women, with USHE colleges and universities having more women on boards ( $46 \%$ ) than the two private institutions ( $31 \%$ ). Research-intensive institutions have the lowest percentage of women serving as trustees ( $34.8 \%$ overall, with USU at $41.7 \%$, U of U at $27.3 \%$, and BYU at $14.3 \%$ ). Regional institutions have $47.1 \%$ of women trustees: SUU (60\%), WSU (54.5\%), DSU (50\%), UVU (45.5\%), and WC (39.3\%). Two-year colleges include fewer women on boards than regional institutions do, but they have more than re-search-focused institutions do ( $45.5 \%$ overall, with SLCC at $58.3 \%$ and SC at $30 \%$ ). Overall, the percentage of women serving on boards of trustees decreased from $38.3 \%$ in 2017 to $33.6 \%$ in 2021.
Utah technical colleges have the lowest percentage (23.1\%) of women trustees or directors, with Ogden-Weber at $36.4 \%$, Mountainland at $31.3 \%$, Bridgerland at $30.8 \%$, Tooele at $25 \%$, Davis at $20 \%$, Uintah Basin at $20 \%$, Dixie at $10 \%$, and Southwest at $7.7 \%$. In 2017, we reported that $24.0 \%$ of governing board positions on technical campuses were filled by women, so the present data show a slight decrease.

In key board leadership positions, women in Utah serve as chair at a rate of $33.3 \%$ (compared to $29.8 \%$ in 2014 and $35.3 \%$ in 2017) and as vice chair at $38.9 \%$ with variation based on institutional characteristics. At the eight public de-gree-granting colleges and universities, women are less likely to be chairs of the board $(30 \%)$ and more likely to be vice chair (50\%). No research-intensive institutions had women as chairs of the board, but one of the three ( $U$ of $U$ ) had a woman serving as vice chair. Regional institutions had fewer women serving as chair ( $20 \%$, WC) and significantly more women serving as vice chairs $(80 \%$, DSU, SUU, UVU, and WSU). Both two-year colleges have women chairs and men in the vice chair role. One of the two private institutions has a woman serving in the chair role, but neither has a female vice chair. For technical colleges, three women are serving in the chair role and two in the vice chair position. No boards had women in both the chair and vice chair role. All other institutions had both a woman and man serving in leadership roles except USU and BYU, which have men serving in both board leadership positions.

## Presidential Cabinets

National: The 2020 CUPA-HR report provides an approximation of gender distributions of presidential cabinets, which shows women in $37.3 \%$ of senior institutional posts. ${ }^{15}$ Although the data are not an exact representation of cabinets

[^0]composition, the report provides a reasonable estimation of women in cabinet-level positions nationally.
Utah: When support positions were removed from consideration, women comprise $37.4 \%$ of cabinets (a significant increase from $27.4 \%$ as reported in 2017 and $23 \%$ in 2014) in degree-granting colleges and universities in Utah. WC tops the list with $70 \%$ of presidential cabinet members being female, followed by SC at $57.1 \%, \mathrm{U}$ of U at $46.7 \%$, UVU at $40 \%$, and BYU, SLCC, USU, and WSU at $28.6 \%$. SUU ( $16.7 \%$ ) and DSU ( $12.5 \%$ ) are ranked at the bottom.
Within Utah's technical colleges, Davis and Dixie both have $50 \%$ of cabinet positions filled by women, followed by Mountainland and Uintah Basin at $33.3 \%$, Ogden-Weber, Tooele, and Southwest at $25 \%$, and Bridgerland at $20 \%$.

## Chief Academic Officers

National: The 2020 CUPA-HR report ${ }^{16}$ maintains that $44 \%$ of chief academic officers (CAO) at colleges and universities nationally are held by women, compared to what we reported in 2017 ( $42 \%$ ) and in 2014 ( $39.3 \%$ ). An ACE's 2018 report $^{17}$ found that the CAO position is a key stepping-stone for women to advance to the presidency. Nationally, it is typical for women to be strongly represented at the assistant or associate CAO roles.
Utah: In Utah, $20 \%$ of CAO positions are held by women (down from $25 \%$ in 2014 and 2017), which falls below the national level ( $44 \%$ ). One of the two private institutions (WC) has a woman CAO, and one of the two-year institutions (SC) does as well, but none of the research-intensive or regional institutions have a woman serving in that role. Hence, two (SC and WC) of eight ( $25 \%$ ) CAOs of USHE institutions are women, which is the same as reported in both 2014 and 2017. Four of eight technical colleges (Bridgerland, Davis, Mountainland, and Uintah) have women CAOs, which is only slightly lower than the national average of $53.1 \%$ for associate degree-granting institutions. ${ }^{18}$
In terms of assistant or associate CAO roles, Utah's leadership pipeline has many highly prepared women leaders in higher education ( $25 \%$ to $54.5 \%$ ), yet most institutions still fall below the national average ( $50 \%$ ), with only UVU ( $75 \%$ ), Dixie ( $66.7 \%$ ), and USU (57.1\%) exceeding it. Researchintensive and regional institutions demonstrate the biggest gaps, with $54.5 \%$ and $43.8 \%$ of women in these positions, respectively, and no women in the CAO role. As previously mentioned, one of the two-year institutions has a woman CAO, but only $25 \%$ of the ACAO posts are held by women.

## Vice Presidents

National: The CUPA-HR 2020 study ${ }^{19}$ reported that $40 \%$ of vice presidents (VP) in postsecondary institutions are female, while ACE reported $39 \%$. ${ }^{20}$ Nationally, women fill $52 \%$ of the vice president roles at associate degree-granting institutions. ${ }^{21}$

Utah: In Utah, although women still fall below national representation (40\%) in the VP role at $33.3 \%$ (an increase from $18.4 \%$ in 2017 and $22.9 \%$ in 2014), progress is being made. At USHE institutions, $29.2 \%$ of VPs are women (up from $19.6 \%$ in 2017 and $23.3 \%$ in 2014), while the representation of women in these roles increased at the two private institutions (from $44 \%$ in 2017 to $50 \%$ in 2021). Of Utah's degreegranting public institutions, only DSU currently has no VPs who are women, while the institutions with the highest percentages include SC ( $66.7 \%$ ), U of U (42.6\%), and UVU (28.6\%). Institutions that join DSU at the bottom include SLCC $(20 \%)$ and USU ( $16.7 \%$ ). The two private institutions stand at $57.1 \%$ (WC) and $40 \%$ (BYU).
The average of women VPs in Utah's technical colleges is $29.4 \%$, which is far below the national average of $52 \%$. Davis, Dixie, Ogden-Weber, and Southwest have $50 \%$ of VP positions filled by women, while Bridgerland, Mountainland, and Uintah Basin have no women in the VP role.
Utah also falls well below the national average of $53 \%$ for women in the assistant or associate vice president (AVP) roles at $35.8 \%$. Of Utah's public institutions, DSU and SC have the highest representation ( $100 \%$ ) in the AVP role, followed by SLCC ( $60 \%$ ) and the U of U ( $46.2 \%$ ). USU ( $27.3 \%$ ) and UVU ( $23.1 \%$ ) rank toward the bottom of the list, followed by SUU ( $0 \%$ ). Private institutions are a combined $28.6 \%$, with BYU at $16.7 \%$ and WC at $100 \%$. Two-year de-gree-granting public institutions have women in $66.7 \%$ of these roles. Only two of Utah's technical colleges have assistant or associate vice president (AVP) roles. Uintah Basin has a single AVP position that is filled by a woman, and Bridgerland has two women in their three AVP positions.

## Academic Deans

National: Academic deans are among key leadership positions within institutions of higher education. The CUPA-HR $2020^{22}$ report suggests that the percentage of female deans in the nation increased from approximately $33 \%$ in 2001 to slightly over $40 \%$ in 2020, which is equivalent to what we reported for Utah in 2017 and constitutes a marked increase from $30.8 \%$ in 2014. In terms of women in assistant or associate academic dean roles nationally, approximately $53 \%$ of these posts are filled by women.
Utah: Utah falls below the national average, with $38.2 \%$ of women deans. There is substantial variation in representation of women in this role across state institutions. Public degreegranting institutions have a higher representation of women in the academic dean role (which is up from $22.9 \%$ in 2017 and $30.8 \%$ in 2014) and private institutions (at $31.3 \%$, which is slightly down from $31.6 \%$ in 2017); WC has women in $40 \%$ of their academic dean positions and BYU at $27.3 \%$. Of Utah's public colleges and universities, regional institutions have more women in the dean role ( $43.3 \%$ overall, with WSU at $71.4 \%$, SUU at $50 \%$, DSU at $28.6 \%$, and UVU at $25 \%$ ) than research-intensive institutions ( $37 \%$ overall, with U of U
at $40 \%$ and USU at $28.6 \%$ ) or two-year institutions ( $27.3 \%$ overall, with SLCC at $33.3 \%$ and SC at $20 \%$ ).

In terms of women in assistant or associate academic dean roles, $51.5 \%$ are filled by women, with both public and private institutions at $45.5 \%$ overall (WC at $50 \%$ and BYU at 45.2\%). Research-intensive intuitions have $57.8 \%$ women in these positions, with the U of U at $62.8 \%$ and USU at $39.1 \%$. Regional institutions have $43.3 \%$ women in these roles overall, with WSU at $66.7 \%, \mathrm{DSU}$ at $50 \%$, UVU at $30 \%$, and SUU with $0 \%$. Of the two-year institutions, only SLCC has these roles, with $41.7 \%$ filled by women.

## Data Summary

Table 1 provides an overview of the top positions examined by gender nationally, across all Utah institutions of higher education (public/private degree-granting and technical colleges), and only degree-granting institutions within Utah (public and two largest private). Overall, there are 45 females ( $36 \%$ ) and 80 males ( $64 \%$ ) serving in the most senior positions across all Utah public and private higher education institutions. Within degree-granting institutions (public and two largest private) there are 34 females ( $37.4 \%$ ) and 57 males (62.6\%). This represents an increase from 2017 (30\%) in the percentage of women in top postsecondary posts around the state.

Table 1. Percentage of Women in Top Positions in US, All Utah Higher Education, and Degree-Granting Institutions

| Leadership Position | US | All Utah <br> (with <br> Technical) | Degree- <br> Granting <br> Utah |
| :--- | :---: | :---: | :---: |
| Board of Higher <br> Education | $39.8 \%$ | $44.4 \%$ | $44.0 \%$ |
| President | $33.0 \%$ | $33.3 \%$ | $50.0 \%$ |
| Trustee ${ }^{23}$ | $28.0 \%$ | $33.6 \%$ | $41.1 \%$ |
| President's Cabinet | $37.3 \%$ | $36.4 \%$ | $37.4 \%$ |
| Chief Academic <br> Officer/Provost | $44.0 \%$ | $33.3 \%$ | $20.0 \%$ |
| Associate/Assistant <br> CAO | $50.0 \%$ | $42.9 \%$ | $42.9 \%$ |
| Vice President | $40.0 \%$ | $33.3 \%$ | $29.2 \%$ |
| Associate/Assistant <br> Vice President | $53.0 \%$ | $37.0 \%$ | $35.8 \%$ |
| Academic Dean | $40.0 \%$ | $38.2 \%$ | $38.2 \%$ |
| Associate/Assistant <br> Academic Dean | $53.0 \%$ | $51.5 \%$ | $51.5 \%$ |
| Total | $\mathbf{5 2 . 0 \%}$ | $\mathbf{3 6 . 0 \%}$ | $\mathbf{3 7 . 4 \%}$ |

Figure 1 compares the Utah public and private degreegranting institution percentages over time from all three briefs. This figure does not include data for technical colleges because the 2014 and 2017 briefs did not.

Figure 1: Change Over Time, Women in Top Positions in USHE


Figure 2 compares the Utah percentages with national percentages and includes pipeline positions that lead to top-level leadership positions (including technical colleges).

Figure 2: Women in Higher Education by Position (All Utah vs. Nation)


[^1]Overall, since 2017, Utah has made progress in the number of women serving as college and university president, while provost positions have decreased. Female representation has slightly increased on boards of trustees, as chairs of those boards, and in the composition of presidential cabinets at public institutions. Representation on the Utah Board of Higher Education has increased to $44 \%$ women, up from $31.6 \%$ in both 2014 and 2017, while increasing in the overall percentages of vice presidents and academic deans in public degree-granting colleges and universities around the state.

## Salaries

The 2017 ACE Pipeline Report ${ }^{24}$ found that the pipeline for higher education leadership is preparing women at a greater rate than men. What does this mean? As women are earning more than half the doctorate degrees across the US, they are more prepared than ever to lead. However, this report also found that at every rank and in every institution type, except two-year private institutions, men are paid more than women by $\$ 13,874$ at public institutions and $\$ 18,201$ at private institutions. This is consistent with a 2020 CUPA-HR report ${ }^{25}$ that found women leaders are generally paid less than men. Interestingly, the report also found that women presidents are less likely to be married and have children than are men.
Across USHE's eight degree-granting institutions CUPA-HR 2020 salary reports showed that men out earn women by $8 \%$, or $\$ 16,396$, across top administrative positions. Salary information for Utah's private institutions was not available. Figure 3 shows the ratio between women's and men's median salaries, with 1.00 representing men's salaries.

Figure 3: National Ratio of Female Median Salary to Male Median Salary


## Current Efforts

Several initiatives and programs hosted by a variety of entities within Utah are working to provide training and development, networking, resources, and other types of support for women who work and lead within postsecondary settings within the state.

First, the Utah Women in Higher Education Network (UWHEN) inspires and prepares Utah women for leadership in higher education. The statewide UWHEN and its campus chapters host professional development events for women employees. UWHEN partners with the UWLP, the Women's Leadership Institute (WLI), and other organizations to broaden its influence within higher education around the state.

Second, community and nonprofit women's leadership programs welcome women from higher education settings to participate in their efforts and offerings. More than 125 of Utah's women's networks, groups, and associations across the state are listed at www.utwomen.org.

Third, Utah's recent governors encouraged leadership opportunities for women. In July 2017, former Utah Governor Gary Herbert issued a letter of support for the Moving the Needle initiative-the first governor in the US to do so. Newly inaugurated Utah Governor Spencer Cox is also expressing strong support of women's leadership. ${ }^{26} \mathrm{He}$ frequently encourages women to get more involved in public service and efforts, and "Equality and Opportunity" is one of six areas in the Administration's 500 -day Roadmap. This Roadmap includes numerous efforts and initiatives that will increase women's representation in leadership roles around the state.

Fourth, in 2019, USHE began sponsoring the Utah Women's Leadership Exchange (UWLE) program as a promising way to create a catalyst for leadership development for women in higher education across the state through intentional mentoring, leadership development, and experiential exchanges. ${ }^{27}$
And finally, policies are already in place ${ }^{28}$ to close the opportunity gap, which will increase equity and inclusion of women and minority leaders. For example, updated and prioritized actions related to USHE Policy R805: Women and Minorities in Faculty and Administrative Positions ${ }^{29}$ in 2019, culminating in the publication of the Utah System of Higher Education Equity Lens Framework. ${ }^{30}$

## Conclusions

Research has shown that most people do not fully realize the value of having women in key leadership positions in institutions of higher education; however, it matters on many fronts. Research findings continue to demonstrate that diverse and inclusive leadership teams produce more creative, innovative, productive, and effective results, which makes gender inclusivity in postsecondary educational settings both critical and timely. In response to recent events, more schools, colleges, and universities are setting goals toward improving overall organizational performance through increased diversity, and gender diversity is considered a key component. This is supported by research that underscores how new pathways to better decision making have been forged through women's diverse leadership styles and their focus on inclusiveness and cooperation. ${ }^{31}$
In 2021, USHE, the Utah Board of Higher Education, and leaders of all types of postsecondary institutions have a rare
opportunity to change the leadership landscape of Utah, helping to bolster Utah's workforce and economy, and, most importantly, to open pathways for its community members to pursue a better quality of life. As the COVID-19 pandemic and social unrest of 2020 demonstrated, it is critical that Utah make timely progress with women's leadership, particularly with women of color, so that leadership teams can address the dynamically changing higher education landscape for the benefit of Utah's diverse population.
Higher education institutions in Utah and across the United States will continue to face challenges, and strong women leaders with outstanding capabilities are needed to help meet these challenges. Therefore, it is imperative to the future of Utah that we prepare and support more women in educational leadership positions. Both women and men benefit by seeing women in leadership roles. Normalizing women leaders provides diverse role models for faculty, staff, and students. It is critical that Utah leaders and residents encourage and prepare all talented individuals to take up the challenge of becoming leaders within the state's educational system.

[^2]${ }^{15}$ CUPA-HR. (2020).
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