



December 6, 2011

Dear Legislator:

The Utah Higher Education Staff Association (UHESA) would like to thank you in advance for your continued support of higher education in the upcoming 2012 legislative session as together we make Utah the greatest state in the Union. As you know, UHESA is comprised of 28,000 staff from the eight higher education state institutions. These are the men and women who recruit, support, retain and advise today's students, faculty, and researchers, and even take the next step in helping these brilliant students find work in the job market.

So, why is the staff of higher education so important? We are the backbone of the ever important Utah System of Higher Education (USHE).

The USHE Fact Sheet for June 2011 states that employees with a bachelor's degree, regardless of major, earn 84% more than those with a high school diploma. With the higher education institutions having seen a 40% increase in enrollment since 2002, the benefits of those higher wages are beginning to be realized as this year the State Tax Commission and the Governor are projecting a \$400 million surplus.

Dr. Joseph Curtin, Director of Institutional Research & Analysis for USHE has suggested that 86% of Utah's workforce will need a post-secondary degree by the year 2025. Dr. Curtin also suggested the majority of the degrees will need to be bachelor's degree or higher. However, since 2008, higher education has seen a cut of \$106 million dollars, or 14%! The consequences resulting from these cuts have ranged from fewer advisors and support staff to higher tuition costs. The cuts have begun to show an alarming statistic; the younger the population, the less education they have.

We feel that if the legislature does not make higher education a priority in this upcoming legislative session we will not have the resources to meet the needs of Utah's workforce by the year 2025. This will mean jobs that would have come to Utah will go somewhere else and the tax revenues for those jobs will be lost. To support the missions of Utah's institutions of higher education, and to **support you in your mission to make Utah a strong and viable place to work and live**, we are asking you for a **Cost of Living Adjustment to recruit and maintain quality staff**.

Our annual "UHESA Day at the Capital" is scheduled for February 16, 2012 in the Spruce Room from 10 am until noon. We would invite you to spend a brief moment of your time with us on that day to discuss how we can help prepare Utah for the future.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Sheri Butler".

Sheri Butler

President, Utah Higher Education Staff Association